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# IN QUEST OF EL DORADO



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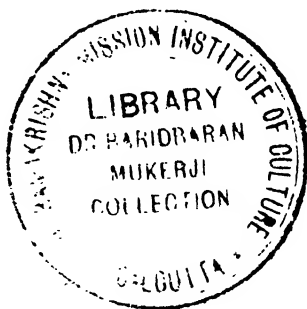
THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.  
TORONTO

# IN QUEST OF EL DORADO

BY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

AUTHOR OF "THE QUEST OF THE FACE," ETC.



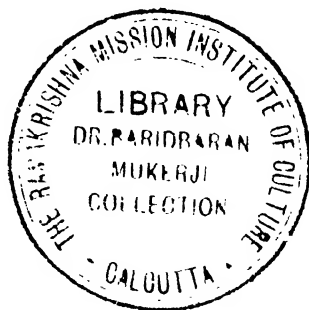
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ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1923

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TO  
THE LITERARY MEMORY  
OF MY FRIEND  
WILFRID EWART  
ACCIDENTALLY SHOT AT MEXICO CITY  
OLD YEAR'S NIGHT 1922







## PREFACE

HAVING voyaged twice to America from British ports and once from Copenhagen, I determined on my fourth visit to approach America from Spain and try to follow Columbus's keel over the waters. This study of the quest of El Dorado is mostly on the trail of the Spaniards. The motive of the first explorers and pioneers was generally the quest of gold. And even to-day most people who seek America do so to make money, many to make a fortune. There is therefore a continuity through the centuries of the quest of fortune.

My wife and I took Spanish ship from Cadiz in Spain to the Indies, landing at Porto Rico, whence we visited in turn Haiti and Cuba. I saw San Salvador, the first land Columbus found, and was also in the Bahamas. We proceeded to New Orleans and then to Santa Fe in New Mexico. I visited Panama, however, alone, and climbed a peak in Darien, to realise once more what it meant to Balboa when for the first time

his eyes lighted on the Southern Sea. The lines of Keats conned from childhood's days exerted some magnetism upon the will—

. . . like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men  
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise,  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

After the Panama expedition, Wilfrid Ewart came out, and with him we followed out some of the adventures of Coronado, and it took us to the Seven Cities of Cibola and the famous Shaleco Dance at the "centre of the Earth." With him my wife and I rode to Jemez, and later we visited Mexico City, where unfortunately Wilfrid Ewart was killed, by a stray shot, on Old Year's night. In Southern Mexico we followed the trail of Cortes, visiting the places which are most memorable in his conquest of Mexico. This took us to the ancient pyramids of the Anahuac plateau and to some of the ruins and buried cities near the border of British Honduras. We rode to the great tree of Tule and to Mitla.

Throughout the descriptions and interpretations endeavour is made to measure the quest for power and the quest of gold in these countries and territories. The Spanish quest of gold has given way in modern times to the American quest of power. But the underlying human passion is one and the same, and is older than

either. One of the titles of Montezuma was "Emperor of the Universe." Without knowledge of human precedent the Aztecs had subdued a hundred tribes and wrought an empire. Cortes, on the other hand, was not much of an improvement upon Montezuma. He changed Aztec into Spanish empire. To-day, however, the United States becomes the arbiter of Latin-American destinies, and a new empire is coming into being. The fate of Mexico in its continuing turmoil may prove a test of American democracy.

I did not visit the republics south of Panama, but confined myself to what an American General has called "the necklace of the Caribbean"—the potential American dominion of the future. I have not, however, thought it necessary here to condemn or approve imperialism. That remains for the individual reader.

My thanks are due to the *Westminster Gazette*, which published many letters from me during the year I was away, and also to the *Nineteenth Century* and to *Country Life*, which published respectively "The Canal" and "The Descent into the Grand Canyon."

STEPHEN GRAHAM.



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# BOOK I

## SPAIN



## I. IN MADRID

### I.

I CARRIED on my shoulder through the streets of Madrid Maria del Carmen de Silva y Azlor de Aragon. She was too proud to admit that she was tired, but was ready to accept the unexampled adventure of being carried in that way. Beside us prattled her brother, Xavier de Silva y Azlor de Aragon, called Chippy for short. They are beautiful, evanescent-looking children, fairies rather than boy and girl, and nothing like the swarthy barefooted urchins who beg of you, who want to clean your boots, who want to sell you water, in every town of Spain. They look as if they had been studied from paintings before they were created. Velasquez painted them, and the children were created from his model—as the shade-like figures of the pictures of El Greco are reproduced in the ballet.

My mind went back to that morose figure of the history-book, Catherine of Aragon—Spain always makes the mind go back. Here I carried Carmen of Aragon on my shoulders, and it might be Henry the Eighth's first Queen, reincarnate as a little child. It is part of the unfairness of

the history-book that we only see a woman like Catherine soured and disillusioned and out of her national setting. She is only interesting as the wife who caused the English Reformation, and the mother of Queen Mary of the Smithfield fires. But she may have been some time a happy little child like Carmen, beautiful and innocent, a face to put with the Madonna to look up at her with flower-like adoration.

The uncle of the children is the present Duke of Alva, with the wonderful name of James Fitz-James Stuart and the amusing supernumerary title of Duke of Berwick, a tall and slender and haughty grandee who lives a life remote from public haunt, remote enough to-day from the page of history, the Low Countries and the scourge of heretics.

So Carmen of Aragon pinches my ears as we stoop to avoid awnings and sun-screens, and she laughs like a Raphaellesque infant-love, and the yellow parrots from upper windows scold us. Dark women, with nine-inch or foot-long combs standing up from their back hair, and black veils (mantillas) hanging over their heads instead of hats, stare at us and smile. They survey me from my brown boots to my brown moustache, to my red cheeks, to my blue eyes, and they recognise the brood of the pirates. "*Inglese*," they whisper.

I have not often been taken for an Englishman, but the Spaniards have no doubt. I may change my attire, I cannot change something. They have seen my like before. Instinctively they

don't altogether like me. Instinctively I don't care too much for them, with their bull-like heads and all their sombre eyes. There's something in the air which bids me think of thumbscrews. It may be the inherited bad conscience of the Drakes and the Raleighs and the dogs who harried the Plate Fleet four hundred years ago, or it may be the horror in the bones which the association of Spain with human cruelty has bred in the mind.

We walk from the Puerto del Sol, the Harbour of the Sun—has not every city in Spain and in the Indies a Puerto del Sol?—a confluence of streets and tramcars in the heart of the city, to a sort of baronial mansion in a narrow street. And there live a community of dukes and duchesses, marquises and marchionesses in suites of apartments. Though not castellated the house is massive as a castle, all of stone, and built sheer on the too-narrow pavement of a narrow cobbled street. The entrance is from a recess in the frontage of this stronghold, and as you step inside you leave behind the street, its trams, its cries, and enter the stillness of history.

The stone stairways and stately halls are hung with historical paintings of the families and with the spoils of battles fought long ago. Here is a great lamp clutched by a Saracen's hand. It was taken after the battle of Lepanto. There, in cases, are great keys of the gates of the cities of Bruges and Ghent, taken in the wars of the sixteenth century. The gold, the jewels come from the altars of Mexico and the idols of the Indians.

The intervening centuries do not speak. Speaks only the great era of Spain.

The mind leaps from that romantic time back to ours, with those wars and quarrels from which the Spain of to-day prefers to stand aloof. The gold which men got in quest of El Dorado, the gold which they piled on ships and guided past English and French pirates, gold which was the royal fifth, gold of the Plate Fleet, gold that was private fortune, the repairing of the splendour of the impoverished nobles of Castille, has been melted down and become national treasure, or personal adornment, or currency, or war-indemnity, or war-chest, or reparations. Some of it has been in the treasure tower of Spandau, some in the vaults of Washington. All men have had their hands in it. Only a little remains in Spain, gilding altar-screens, making showy merchants' chains, weighing in the treasures of the Escorial. Rapacity for gold killed Spain, we are told, and yet Spain has survived in a quiet, old-fashioned, dignified mode of life, and cares less to-day for gold than the rest of the nations.

That, however, concerns very little my Carmen of Aragon, who will pass through life without ever knowing anything of reality, marrying some prodigiously polite grandee and not a bluff and cantankerous English Henry. She laughs, she imitates all I do or say, she walks away, and Chippy takes one of my hands in his and leads me to his mother, quiet and simple and pious and demure, all in dull black velvet. To-morrow I shall go to the Palace and see the King and Queen

and the grandees and their ladies wait on twenty-four of the poor of Madrid.

## II.

You enter Spain through glass doors and see written up "Silence." You open your guide-book and find you are looking at Exhibit A. I have been told that Spain is like Russia, but there is this difference. Belief in Russia will survive the decease of Russia by at least five hundred years. *Something is coming out of Russia*: yes, but out of Spain?

No one goes to Spain to see the future. Many go there to see the past, sticking out as it were through the present. And so with me—to make a sentimental journey and trail an idea geographically across the world. I should like to see Columbus again, see him in the midst of the courtiers and mocked by them, and see upon him the smile or frown of Ferdinand and Isabella. My eyes would like to feast on the cloth of gold of the grandees of Spain—go back four centuries and yet be in to-day, and see as it were in a vision the gold of Old Spain and the gold of the Indies, the beautiful bright gold that may be sacrificed but must never be worshipped.

So I am pleased to go to the Royal Palace at Madrid on Maundy Thursday and see the King and Queen and the Court in the gorgeous ceremony of the washing and the feeding of the poor. Once every year it is done; the Queen tends twelve poor women, the King tends twelve poor



men. They are usually all blind. It has been done for centuries. Ferdinand and Isabella did it also, and Columbus must have watched them in his day, saying of those who mocked him—" *They are the blind*; wash them and feed them also."

As we stand in an interior court of the palace behind a row of halberdiers in quilted coats, the chime of eleven o'clock seems to blend with Southern sunshine, and there breaks out from a hidden orchestra mysterious Eastern music heralding the approach of to-day's King and Queen. Searching, questing strains tell of mystery, of aching loneliness and hidden loveliness—the haunting introit of Milpiger's "Jerusalem." Erect stand the stately halberdiers in their scarlet coats, holding at arm's length their bright halberds of Toledo steel. And along the corridors of the palace come carelessly and as it were at random, in twos and threes, talking together, the Duke of Alva, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the Duke of San Fernando, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, the Marquis of Torrecilla, and other nobles, all dressed in gold-embroidered coats and wearing orders and insignia and medals. They are the grandees of to-day, and their faces peer out strangely from the midst of their grandeur—peering out, as it were, from their family trees, from time itself.

Come the King and the Queen, and the King is wearing the uniform of an infantry captain, for this King is democratic, but over his shoulders hangs the magnificent collar of the Order of the Knights of the Golden Fleece. I wonder if the

Emperor Charles Fifth, Cortes' Emperor, instituting this order of the Golden Fleece, thought first of his Spaniards as the Argonauts of the age, the youth of Spain aflame with a vision of gold. The golden collar hung in a long V on the King's back and seemed to have worked on it some noble history, reminding me there, in the midst of the crush of the palace, of that perfect Spenserian verse :

Yt framéd was of precious ivory,  
That seemed a work of admirable witt ;  
And therein all the famous history  
Of Jason and Medea was ywritt ;  
Her mighty charms, her furious loving fitt ;  
His goodly conquest of the golden fleece ;  
His falséd fayth, and love too lightly flitt ;  
The wondred Argo, which in venturous peece  
First through the Euxine seas bore all the flower of Greece.

Columbus was a Jason of a later time, and there were many other Jasons and would-be Jasons—Cortes, Pizarro, Balboa, Coronado.

The democratic King Alfonso wears his collar, however, with an easy grace, and there is upon his visage a whimsical expression which remains. The Queen looks more a queen than he does king. She is wearing the diadem, and she walks like a queen in a picture, her long cream veil of lace enveloping her, trailing downwards and backwards as she walks. Her ladies are in luminous silks, with high combs in their hair, and long lace mantillas like the Queen's, cream-coloured, hanging from their combs to the hems of their robes, giving them the mystery of beauty which is part hidden and part revealed.

Following them go the diplomats of all nations, all differently dressed in the full Court dress of their respective nationalities. And they wear their stars and their ribbons, too. There goes the Chinese Ambassador with embroidered golden dragons on his velvet coat; there goes the American Ambassador in spotless lawn and glimmering white tie. The French and the Italian ambassadors look like diplomats, men with old secrets, profound players of human chess; even the English Minister looks as if he knew more than he would ever say, but the American is quite different, a new piece of cloth on a very old garment, as it were upon Joseph's coveted coat of many colours. His fresh, clean-shaven, and young face surmounted on its stiff linen collar may have been recruited to diplomacy, and quite likely was, from a guileless Christian brotherhood. Though why turn the light upon him, unless it is because the Power he represents is the power in the New World which to-day affects most the liberties of the children of Spain overseas. Their representatives are here also, of Mexico, of Nicaragua, of Cuba, of Colombia. And here in state comes the "Patriarch de las Indias" himself, and with him the Papal Legate to Spain, the leaders of the Cortes, the Prime Minister, the Government.

All pass, and the halberdiers close up and the public follows, the chosen public asked to witness the monarchs' charity. It is so arranged that all take up their places in the chamber where the poor are waiting, and then the King and Queen come in.

I stand away at the back and look through the veils and screens of the hundreds of ladies' mantillas which hang from the high combs in their hair. It is as if the scene were too gorgeous and had to be viewed through a glass darkly. But yonder are the poor blind waiting in stalls, twelve black-shawled old women waiting for the Queen, twelve empty-eyed men in silk hats waiting for the King. In front of them all stand golden ewers with water, and the ritual of washing commences. One spot of water is dropped on each foot. One rub of the towel to each, and then, stooping, the Queen kisses each woman's big toe; the King kisses each man's big toe, too. Stately Queen Ena never changes her devout expression, but democratic King Alfonso, who rules by smiles, makes a comical face all the while.

Follows the feeding of them. All the grandees and their ladies take part. The Queen takes the centre on one side of the room, the King on the other. Vast quantities of viands are brought from the kitchens and pantries of the palace. Begins the *Comida de los Pobres*, and every helping is enough to feed a family, and every helping is given personally by King and Queen to the chosen poor.

The King smiles all the time, and eats bits of what he gives, and tries to persuade the Archbishop to eat also and so break his fast, part of the King's prevalent facetiousness and jollity. Did he not make a wry face over kissing each old man's foot, as if it really were disgusting? Does he not on

purpose break up the solemnity by dropping round rolling cheeses on the floor and letting oranges slip out of his hands? That makes all feel happy, all except the blind. They see nothing; they do not even eat; all that comes to them is taken away and packed into hampers to be sent to their homes. Their happiness is deferred. It is always so with the blind. They enjoy later what those who see enjoy in anticipation. As the King and Queen moved to and fro in that gilded crowd it seemed I saw Columbus there. He *saw*, and he gilded the grandees in time with a deeper crust of gold.

### III.

Spain's positive contribution to civilisation is a sense of human dignity. This is shown in private life by elaborate manners and the instinctive respect of man for man. Other nations used to have it; it is a marked characteristic of Shakespearian drama, but revolutions have removed it. In Spain there is a delicacy of approach to strangers and even to friends which is unknown in the rest of the world. The bows, the marked attentions, the gravity and stately style of the Spaniard, contrast remarkably with the self-enwrapped sufficiency of the Germans, the unrestraint of the Americans, the humorous slap-dash of the English, and "devil take the hindmost" of the Scotch.

The Spanish houses, too, with their noble portals, interior courts, patios, fountains, bespeak

a sense of dignity. It is not a country of deal front-doors and bottle-neck passages like England, nor of porches and porch-swings like America, nor of doors on the street like France. It is true that the interiors are devoid of fancy upholstery; there is a bareness as of a castle, an asceticism which expresses itself in straight-back chairs. But there will be flowers blooming and birds singing—there will be a graciousness which is often missed in the seemingly over-comfortable over-hospitable interiors of English and American houses.

Gravity goes so far with the Spaniard that he hardly will be seen wearing tweeds. Loud attire is an offence. The Spaniard wears black and seems to wear it out of general respect. The women, moreover, do not flaunt their fashions in the churches or the streets. In Madrid the reproach cannot be made that you cannot tell the *monde* from the *demi-monde*; the latter is always more indiscreetly dressed. The Queen of Spain has no legs.

You still drive with horses in Madrid; it is more decorous than the ill-mannered car bursting with speed even when going slowly. And the rudeness of the klaxon and the tooting-horn are distasteful to the Spaniard. Behind fine horses, at ease, leisurely and graciously, there it is true the women will show what Paris wears.

Then in the ways of men to women the Spaniard surely has the first place for real politeness and regard. The French say "Place aux dames" but do not give it. The Englishman is gallant with women when they are good-looking

or if they remind him of his mother. But the Spaniard's politeness is invariable.

Doubtless the French at their best come nearest to the Spanish in their respect for one another, just as the North-American Yankees are furthest from them. The French are the most humane people in the world, because the most tolerant; and ever so much less cruel in temperament than the Spanish. But their *cochonnerie*, the ribaldry of their burlesques, the wretched homes, the open and stinking conveniences of the capital of civilisation, decency forbids in Madrid.

#### IV.

With all that, however, let a *caveat* be entered. The Spanish hold something which is increasingly valuable in our modern human society because it is all the while getting rarer—the gold of good manners. That is true, and must remain after all adverse criticism of the race. But the Spanish have a negative characteristic which through the centuries has outraged the fellow-feelings of the rest of humanity, and that is cruelty, a lust for torture.

The Auto de Fé, the ordeals of the Inquisition dungeons, these in the past; the survival of the bull-ring and the plaza de gallos, these to-day; and remarked at all times the Spanish inhumanity to horses, seem to outweigh good manners. And the behaviour of the crowd about the bull-ring—hideously burlesque and unrestrained, may perhaps have marked the crowds who in Seville in

the sixteenth century watched brother men burn to death for the good of the Holy Father at Rome and the greater glory of God.

Spain-lovers have said to me—"Do not go to the bull-fight!" But in facing Spain as in facing any other country with some desire to know it, not merely to be struck by it, one must face what is dark and sinister as well as what is beautiful and annunciatory.

Hence a visit to the Square of the Bulls at Madrid on Easter Sunday, and the King is there and the President of the Sport, and a vast populace in sun and shade. Christ rose this morning; this afternoon six bulls must die. He rose indeed. Fifty thousand church bells told the world. Lilies triumphant rose from bare boards in every home; we and all the children ate eggs of peace. This afternoon—Easter has gone—the populace will watch the bulls.

Next to me on the one hand sits a Japanese artist with a score of paper fans. In front are Madonna-faced women with high yellow combs in the crown of their hair and cream-coloured lace hanging therefrom in an exquisite effect. The Japanese has crayons and decorates his blank fans rapidly. Group after group he sketches in on these fluttering fans, and then the grand parade of toreadors in all their finery, and then the picadors, and then the fighting. He is concentrated; he seems to feel nothing, but when his twenty fans are done he gathers them together, picks himself up, looks round him circumspectly, and departs.



I suppose bull-fights are seldom described except in Spain and the Latin-American countries. In these, the descriptions may exclude all other news and cover whole issues of daily papers, with coloured supplements as well. But for peoples other than Spanish there is something that is intolerably cruel in the bull-fight. It is even thought a little compromising in a public person to have visited one. A British Prime Minister on holiday in Andalusia indignantly denies that he went to a bull-fight. It would lose him votes in England. Yet Spain is part of the civilised world and her conscience seems untroubled. Great crowds flock to see them, and in Madrid or Seville on a Sunday afternoon all the town is moving one way. Every city in Spain has its permanent amphitheatre for bull-fighting, and you may see as many as ten thousand spectators in the circles, tier upon tier, round the arena. On no other occasion could one see as many Spaniards together. The bull-fight is for them a great national turn-out.

The bulls, which have led a happy country existence up till now, are waiting, each for his last gory twenty minutes. The picadors will prick him, the staff will plant the banderillas in him, the matador will endeavour to plunge a sword into his heart, the public will hiss or clap, the asses will drag the stiff carcase round the arena and away.

A great door opens. Into the arena plunges a big black bull—"into this universe and why not knowing." He is full of mad energy and

bolts for any red flag at any distance that his short sight will show him. The elegant toreros save themselves by hiding behind screens or jumping low walls. And while the bull stands thwarted and puzzled, in comes a doleful procession from the wings. The picadors arrive—men with long lances, mounted on starved, jaded, spectral-looking horses. The horses are blindfolded; they also have their vocal cords cut, and whatever happens to them, dumb animals will be dumb. The men mounted on them have strong wooden saddles and hooded stirrups, and their legs are cased in iron. The toreros with their red and blue capes, and the attendants dressed in deep scarlet, try to lure the bull towards the horses. They stand in front of them and then nimbly step out of the way when the enraged bull charges at them. The picadors drive their lances deep between the shoulders of the bull; the bull murders the horse, lifts horse and rider in the air; the first picador saves himself. His work is done. The second then comes forward, pricks the bull, and has his horse disembowelled. The third does the same. The fourth horse refuses to come into position to be butchered, and escapes with a laceration. The time allotted to the picadors has run out, anyway. One horse lies dead. The remaining horses are beaten till they rise, and the picadors mount them again, though the entrails are hanging out of them, and they ride them out of the arena.

The bull is bleeding. He is greatly enraged. He paws the ground like a dog seeking a bone;

he bellows, he charges here and there, and always misses! But the toreros plunge coloured darts into his back till he is hanging in a clatter of them, and he cannot shake them out. Then comes the matador, dressed like a gentleman, gold-embroidered, gallant, with his hair in a tiny queue behind, with his blood-red cape, with his straight flashing blade of Toledo. He faces the bull alone, and tempts him and fools him. It is part of his art to perform various showy tricks and deceits, jump the bull's back and the like. On these his repute as a bull-fighter depends. Then he must beguile the bull into a convenient attitude for despatching him in the right way. It is not too easy. The impatient crowd, which bawls and guffaws and cries out witticisms, now hisses and taunts the fighter and claps the bull when the bull makes an aggressive onslaught. The matador must take a risk and make an opportunity. Twice he essays; twice he loses his sword. New swords are brought him. And at the third attempt he puts two feet of steel into the life-blood of the bull.

The bull pauses, stares, still flourishes his horns, keeps his enemies at a distance and then, beginning to lose consciousness, kneels down on his front knees like a cow taking a rest in a meadow. The toreros are all around him. He stares at them with glazing eyes. Then the matador plucks out his sword and the bull rolls over, dead. Trumpets blow; out come the troikas of asses, and one set is harnessed to the dead horse and the other to the body of the bull. In the circles of the

amphitheatre ten thousand voices are busily discussing it, but ere they have got far in talk the arena has been cleared and all are hushed as the great door opens and bull number two comes rushing on to die.

It makes a devastating impression on the heart of the Northerner; makes you, for that afternoon at least, hate Spain. It is so depressing that for days you cannot get over it. The horror of it haunts one as if one somehow had learned that humanity had gone wrong and no life anywhere was worth while.

Curiously enough, however, you meet Englishmen and Americans who have been many times. I sat next to an Englishwoman who somehow had come to enjoy the fight—thought the matadors so elegant, so wonderful, thought they ran such a risk (and so they do), excused much on the ground that the meat was sold cheap to feed the people of the slums.

And now some time has elapsed, and I can well understand it. Despite all the horror and pain of it I also feel a persistent craving to go again. There is a fatal fascination in this brutal sport. You want to see those tearsome bulls killed; want to look on at death. The last Englishman I met had been to twenty-two, yet at his first he was so ill he had almost to be carried out. Cruelty, like other lusts, grows on what it feeds on. Englishmen, though naturally they at first reject it, can take pleasure in cruelty also.

## v.

On the Texan border, where, under United States law, bull-fighting is forbidden, the Spanish population still have mock bull-fights at religious festivals. In these you may see Sancho Panza mounted on a turbulent ass as picador, and a lot of very broad farce. But there is often a religious element; the matador coming forth as Christ, and the bull, all in red, as Satan. A remarkable reversal of Christian symbolism, this—He who returned to Malchus the ear which Peter had struck off will destroy evil with a sword! Still, it is only a game, and well in keeping with the spirit of Church plays in olden times. The parody of the bull-fight is much happier than the fight itself.

A deficiency in Spanish character is humour. The Spaniard is very witty, unusually apt at repartee, but he does not easily smile. This is specially noticeable in the children. There is something of the morose in them which does not readily dissolve in laughter or tears. Perhaps this can be taken as a partial explanation of Spanish cruelty. They have sombre minds.

Of course, one ought not to make the mistake of placing upon the Spaniards the whole of our iniquity. There is no race that can show a history devoid of cruelty. If the followers of Cortes burned the soles of the feet of the last of the Aztec kings to find out where his gold was hidden, did not the barons of England do the same to the Jews to furnish them with money for the

Crusades? Though the Inquisition caused men and women to be burned to death for heresy in Seville, are not people to be found in Georgia ready to do the same to-day to negroes for a smaller offence? Is there a page in Spanish history which shows more inhumanity to man than has been displayed in the Russian Revolution?

The Spaniard is cruel; it is admitted, and he is cruel in ways which are particularly obnoxious to the Anglo-Saxon, who, when he sees a man ill-treating a horse, is almost ready to rush in and kill the man. But other peoples can be cruel also. That does not extenuate the Spaniard's fault, but it is permitted to remark without offence: he is cruel, but he has remarkably good manners, he has a greater sense of the dignity of life.

## II. EN ROUTE FOR CADIZ BAY

TRAVELLING by way of Rouen and Chartres to Burgos and Toledo, and by way of Bordeaux to Cordoba and Cadiz prompts certain comparisons—Spain is grander than France; France has more life.

The note of the Gothic is aspiration out of stone, but of the Moorish it is barbaric splendour within stone. The asceticism of stone reigns at Durham, at Rouen, and is somehow transfigured into the loveliness of doves' plumage at Chartres, but in the Spanish cathedrals speaks chiefly gold. It is the same at Burgos, gilded with some of the first gold of Mexico, as it is at the cathedral of Toledo; architecturally unremarkable, but interiorly oppressed with riches. As you enter by the old doors it is not so much into the presence of God as into the power of the Church.

Spain is the most faithful son of the Church, and France the most reprobate. France, like the prodigal, may be nevertheless nearer to salvation. France is germinative, and if cynical yet eternally curious, whereas Spain is incurious. Spain does not want to know. She is the last of the democracies of Europe to rebel. Probably the state

of society in Spain could not be defined as a democracy.

The great ports of Spain are, however, different in temperament from the cities of the interior. Boisterous Bilbao in the north and Barcelona in the south are insurgently democratic. In these is a revolutionary movement pointing against Church and Monarchy. In these there is an energy, a commercial hustle, a will to power, which reminds one of the cities of Northern Italy.

Geographers, map-makers of Europe, seem very much at fault in the way they print the names of Spanish towns. The faint print usually reserved for villages is used for Santander and Bilbao. But these are great and stirring cities with modern buildings which for beauty and strength of design can only be compared with the architecture of the greater cities of the United States. Again, how absurd it is to print Bayonne and Biarritz in large type and indicate San Sebastian, their neighbour across the Spanish frontier, in faint italics! San Sebastian is a finer city and a more beautiful resort. You can see Spain there in the season at its grandest.

But one would not have been surprised to find Toledo printed fine, for there truly, famous though it be in history, we have an obscure unchanging seat of the past. Toledo is more truly Spain than is Bilbao or Barcelona. It is the Spain that was. Toledo is a close-packed mountain-built city of winding, narrow, shady ways and high, overhanging ancient houses. It reminds one of the Saracen villages high up on



the cliffs above the sun-bathed Riviera. It was Moorish and Jewish before it was Spanish, famous throughout the Middle Ages for its steel. They try to sell you Toledo swords in a score of little shops to-day. And in the past, has not Toledo steel pushed its way through the vitals of innumerable duellists? And Spanish mail, Spanish armour, Spanish shields, and Spanish swords have had an immense repute. It was the southern counterpart of Swedish steel. But Solingen has gone on and made domestic cutlery for the teeming populations of industrialism, whilst Toledo still makes swords. Toledo has no street-cars. Toledo has no cinema. It has no cable office. Its hotels, spacious and quaint, have no rooms with bath, no room telephones. There are barber-shops, but the poles do not revolve. Nothing revolves.

There is a pack of some of the most persistent beggars I have seen. Blasco Ibañez says they live on the English and American tourists who visit the cathedral, and he laughs at the tourists' stupidity and credulity. But if the tourists ceased to come the beggars would not cease to be. This beggary is a disgrace to a rich country like Spain. That small boys should rush in to beg the sugar you have left over from your morning cup of coffee is unseemly and out of keeping with the otherwise stately ways of the people. In Spain thousands beg who could quite well be earning a living, and the mendicancy of these defeats the case of the paralysed, the blind, the aged, from whom few would otherwise turn away.

In Toledo, however, lurks the great cathedral, like some strange rare monster of the past. It is horribly cramped, and seems to be trying to hide its vast, aged form from modern gaze. There lies the dust of kings, emperors, archbishops; undisturbed, unprovoked. It seems the low notes of the organ should never swell to anything clamorous and new. All is hushed as you walk around; gloom of unlighted centuries is upon you.

From this to the blue sea, what a change! From this to the fresh and breezy harbour of Cadiz. To Spain's window on to the New World, her most romantic starting-point in all her history.

It is a long journey! I prefer to go third class. It makes a difference, for the carriages are always full, always emptying, changing, filling again with Spanish humanity. The second and first class coaches are more or less empty; empty also that curious apartment called a "Berlin." There is a train *de luxe* from Madrid to Cadiz. In that, of course, you can travel in comfort and sleep at night, sleep also by day, and pass the scenery and Spain as rapidly as a millionaire could wish.

This train is called a "mixto," like the *smeshanny* in Russia. When it comes to a halt the engine-driver gets out. A man on an ass starts off to tell the village that the train has come and that if any one wants to catch it he had better begin packing. I took my first day's ticket to a name of a place at random—Vadollano. The booking-clerk bade me repeat it, and then

sold me the ticket. I occupied myself trying to imagine what sort of a hotel I'd find there. The train commenced its uneasy retardation onward, crawling upward over Spain. Dark but gentle-looking folk filled the carriage, always saluting with a *Buenos dias* when they entered and an *Adios* when they got out, and never starting to eat or drink anything without offering all around to do the same. My wife and I kept a nicely filled basket and a bottle of sherry, and we joined very happily in the children's game of offering our food knowing it would be declined. We found, however, that two invitations to a glass of sherry usually overcame the modesty of the peasants, who, surprised and pleasantly shocked at finding the wine to be of Xeres, seemed, upon drinking it, to become our friends for life.

The men wore close-fitting black caps or those broad-brimmed box-topped sombreros which one associates with pictures of West Indian planters. The women wore long earrings, commonly of tortoise-shell; the men and the children many rings; they travelled with birds, frequently bringing their canaries, of which they seemed very fond, into the train with them. In came beggars, in came singers. A blind boy sang folk-songs in a strange wild tone, rather harsh at first hearing, but growing on the ear. His melodies go from the guttural into the minor, and touch one's heartstrings truly enough. Girls are wearing flowers in their hair; and here comes a sight that reminds me well of the Caucasus—a tight pig of wine. From out the little window we look upon

many vineyards, brown, stubbly, scarce shooting green though the season is advanced. It is high land and bracing and yet also a wine country. Men come in with wooden boxes filled with wine, and in these boxes are bungs which they withdraw to drink from the hole.

How the people talk, as if there were springs in their mouths, and each sentence was rapidly and mechanically let loose from the lips! No one has any interest in the view from the window; the only interest is human interest. However, we pass at points through bull-farms, herds of Andalusian bulls waiting for their testing for the bull-ring or, having been tested, waiting for that gory last half-hour of torment and red flags. The bulls always take the eyes of the people. They have an enormous interest in them. One might almost say that the Spaniard has got a reflection of the bull in his countenance now. The bull is his national animal.

It was very dark by the time Vadollano was reached, for the train was late. We got out, and were followed by a half-naked beggar boy, who answered no questions, being so intent on begging. Outside the station there seemed to be nobody and no town. I sought a shelter and could find none. In dismay we returned to the station and found the ticket-checker of the train, and he advised us to take another ticket to Baeza. The old train was waiting, had not budged, and would wait half an hour more.

And so to Baeza and a mosquito-cage bed in a hotel which smelt as hotels smell when they are

worst. Next day we went on to beautiful Cordoba. Here was a new vision of Spain, one less ascetic and less fierce than that of the North. The sun had driven out the sombre. In Cordoba with its white houses and fresh blooming flowers, its beautiful gates and doors and interior courts with palms and fountains, we had a vision of beautiful living. The whole of Cordoba is like a precious work of art. I suppose every one who learns to love it must be loth to leave it.

But we are making for that window on to the New World, longing for that new way to India—the new Spain. The train goes on along the Guadalquivir valley through all the sherry vineyards growing green for miles, to the town of Xeres itself, and onward to Gibraltar and the end of the world. And there at the end, far out on a loop of land on the loveliness of the sea, was Cadiz, the city of Armadas and the going and coming of the Plate Fleet, a city now of white houses, Spaniards, cats of all kinds, and innumerable parrots who out-talk humanity on its streets—of all that, but of few ships. I walk along the sea-front on that street that bears the proud name Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, and I see three ships, and among them the one that is waiting for me.

BOOK II  
THE INDIES

15499

## I. THE COLUMBUS JOURNEY

### I.

WE left the beautiful harbour of Cadiz, with its white houses and palm trees and its daintily silhouetted towers and turrets. And the shores unclasped the blue bay and we rode upon the billows of the ocean.

The ship was a Spaniard and all the people on it Spanish or West Indian, and the voyage we were making was the one Columbus made, seeking a new way to India and coming upon the Indies. And the first evening and every evening we pushed "our prows into the setting sun," not seeking, of course, but knowing, with the romance of the first journey mostly forgotten.

The passengers are mostly Cubans, and they kiss their hands to tell me what a fine place Cuba is, how perfect their capital. They put salt in their *café au lait*, plaster salt on their sliced oranges before eating them, and pour from the salad oil bottle on to every dish they eat. Their children, with bare legs, black hair, gold earrings, run about all day with little dogs on strings, and shout. There is no dancing on the ship, no orchestra, but instead Mass three times a week



and the saloon made up as a chapel. The ladies are very big, if young, and lie in deck-chairs doing nothing. The men play dominoes and smoke cigars.

We put in at Teneriffe and take on crates of onions for twenty-four hours. Boys in boats beset us with canaries in cages, pups in sacks, and fat, wise-looking parrots on perches. The reek of onions drives out the stowaways from the hold. Onions litter the bottoms of the empty barges, squashed onions disfigure our decks. Indeed, everybody and everything smells of onions for two days.

The food is Spanish and of a sort the sailors of Columbus must have known. All is cooked in olive oil, and I notice the Cubans and Porto Ricans are not pleased if the plates do not gleam. Heaped-up plates of rice and chicken, rice and little bits of rabbit, rice and bits of beef, come nearly every day, and Spanish omelettes and olive stew and remarkable dishes of highly spiced fish covered with flaming pimento. There is an excellent table wine of which there is an inexhaustible supply and it is free as air, and there is a glass of sherry for every one on Sunday evening. The Spaniards do well on this. Even little Maria Luisa, aged ten, and Ysabel, aged eight, my two best friends, have their wine and sherry and disperse with vigour the oily heaps of food. One evening these precious little girls borrowed some matches—what to do?—to finish smoking a fat Habana cigar which one of the men passengers had left on deck!

The children talk to one another more by gestures than by words, and I shall never forget how one of them, Palmyra, described a bull-fight she had seen at Barcelona and the horror of it, lowering her head between her shoulders and looking out with gleaming eyes to imitate the bull, jumping to indicate terror and assault, putting her little hand before her eyes at the thought of the disembowelling of the horses, and showing with a horrified twinkling of her fingers the impression of the flowing of the blood. Bull-fights are forbidden in Cuba, but these children had been to Spain on a holiday and so had seen the national and traditional festival for the first time.

In fifteen days on a little ship with two dozen passengers one naturally learns a great deal. An English person is a rarity on such a ship, and every one sought to engage me in conversation. They were as much interested in "Cristobal Colon" and Ponce de Leon and Nuñez de Balboa as I was, and had pictures of Columbus in their pocket-books, and thought how greatly he'd have been struck to be travelling on such a boat as ours.

This one is a beautiful voyage, so serene, with blue skies every day and a just-waving sea and a breeze behind the boat that wafts our smoke ahead of it. It is delicious to sit up on the very nose of the vessel and be a Columbus now. We are splashing it new, splashing it white, in stars and white balls and darts of surprised foam. Green and yellow seaweed sags up from the depths of the ocean and, like untraversed liquid glass,

the sea is ahead of us in curving lines, in natural wild parallels to the sun. It is afternoon, the sun is going over and will go under. He is drawing us on, and I could almost believe our steam counts for naught. He is illuminating the wide empty ocean, and we stare till we veritably see latitude and longitude upon it. We ascend, we lift, we rive a way o'er the mirror in virginal V's of new frothing foam. We are making for the centre of the far horizon, the sun ahead of us; we are making a new way to India; we are going to make West East.

## II.

Each still night we seem to pass through something, as it were through mists and veils which are hiding something new. Each morning we rush on to the decks whilst they are still wet and the Castilian sailors are swabbing them. We peer with glasses over the virginal, fresh, foaming blue. The sailors go. The sun dries the timbers. We partake of coffee and smoke a sweet-scented Habana cigarette. The sailors return and pull up white canvas awnings, at the cracks and at the sides of which glimmer blue of sky and brightness of sea. The children come out from their cabins to play, tumbling over their pet dogs. All is happiness.

The men indulge in a new sport to while away the time—they try to catch the fast-passing seaweed which lies in sponges and coils in the limpid sea. While Columbus took heart of grace

because of the banks of seaweed his ship encountered, believing it a sign of the proximity of land, we on our Spanish ship, making in prosaic fashion a bought-and-paid-for passage to the Indies, find the same seaweed a means of fun. Four or five Cubans and Spaniards take a bottle and a rope and a tangle of wire and fish for seaweed from the bows. The weather-side gets quite a little crowd upon it, for the crew also take part in the joy of throwing out a bottle and wire to entangle floating green tresses of sea-maidens or big floating sponges of their toilets. Often flies the bottle through the air and often goes up the chorus of disappointment as it hits a wave instead of a bank of weeds. But the exultation is great when a tangle is caught and brought up on deck. It is very pretty and hair-like, and the little children press it between the pages of Ibañez' novels, which form the only literature on board. That which heartened Columbus diverted us.

Then we entered the tropics and slept in the hot noontides, waking to clatter up on deck into the freshness of afternoon breezes. The evenings were very beautiful, sunset always giving a pageant. One night there came the most flaming and devastating sunset, descried beyond perilous and mountainous clouds, and from the north all the way to the west a grand processional mass of shadows was seen fleeing, like the pageant of the world's vanities going to judgment. To us it was poetry, but to Columbus and his companions it might well have suggested a growing nearness to

the actual place of doom, to where the sun actually dipped down and went under the flat earth—a terrible thought, yet for a daring spirit a haunting and alluring one also.

I suppose there came a point in Columbus' voyage when he might as well keep on as turn back. Turning back became more terrible the longer they kept on. And curiosity must have fed on itself and increased. At any rate, it is still terrible to stand in the stern at night and look back. There in the darkness lies the past like a book that is read, or written, and a door that is shut. It breathes silence. The clamorous Old World is far behind and cannot be heard.

We started with a young crescent moon, and she grew to the full with us over the still ocean. The stars seemed to wave, and our mainmast jaggling to and fro seemed intent on sighting and taking aim at the loveliness in the sky. We are escaping; we are going away; we are doing what they did; we are shooting the moon.

All the Cubans and Porto Ricans and Haitans seem to take on more life, become more vivacious. There is no mistaking it, they are nearing their homes. They have been as homesick for the Indies as the mariners were homesick for Spain. It's all in reverse order. "You'd like Habana—it's bigger and better than Barcelona," I am told; "yes, better than Madrid."

The ship comes into more humid airs, and in the evening all the passengers begin to croon Spanish songs. They are all together and happy, men, women, and children, and they feel they

are getting near their blessed islands. It infects the crew, infects every one, like an extra idleness, till we come at last one night to a balmy and dreaming coast, where the cocoanut palms like cobweb dusters rise up to the low clouds of the sky, and the full moon through the mists shines in silver—from the waves to the shore. We are there at last. We have got to the other side.

The ship goes still and hoots. We have our last supper together. There is plenty of wine. "Drink deep," cry the Cuban passengers to those of us who disembark at Porto Rico. "It is *ultimo vino*, your last glass of wine."

"Porto Rico is not dry?"

"Oh yes," say the Porto Ricans mournfully. "You see, it belongs to the United States. Cuba is only under supervision of America, but Porto Rico belongs to her, and is dry."

"*Seca! Seca!*" they cry explanatorily in Spanish.

"Well, with the last glass, here's to Christopher Columbus, who discovered the island. He made the bridge from Old Spain, and incidentally brought the first fire-water too. All we who arrive arrive after him."

### III.

We enter the harbour of San Juan de Porto Rico, and leisurely pass the old stone castle on the rock and the Spanish fortifications. They look to be several centuries older than they are, and are not unlike the weather-beaten ruins at the

entrance to old ports on the east of Scotland. They mounted Spanish guns, but were without power to repel the North American invader of 1898. The island was then wrested from Spain and, though entirely Spanish, was incorporated in the United States. Natives of Porto Rico are now *ipso facto* American citizens. It was novel to me to realise that a whole population of American citizens was without English, and did not know George Washington from Abraham Lincoln.

The boat was hailed by the quarantine authorities and stopped. The Spanish captain, doctor, and officers all seemed very nervous. This was apparent to the American doctor and immigration officials, who strove to keep them calm. There was nothing to worry over—the inspection was only a formality. The crew and the passengers lined up and showed their arms to be free from skin disease. The “aliens” were vaccinated. The immigration officers were remarkably polite. They brought copies of the *New York Times* on board, and those of us who could read English glanced at the news. They sat us one by one in front of them and asked us all those ridiculous questions: What is your nationality? what is your race? are you a polygamist? do you believe in subverting an existing government by force? have you ever been in jail? how much money have you got? where is your final destination? are you booked through? Imagine old Columbus being questioned by an immigration officer—there’s something humorous about it. And Spaniards,

whose forefathers manned the galleons of the Plate Fleet and lorded it on land and sea, now pay, in addition to ten dollars for passport visa, a head-tax of eight dollars ere they land. But all that is prose. There is no poetry in it, as there is little poetry in the government of the United States. Its methods are dull, humourless, and sober. The Americans are a light-hearted, humour-loving people, but they have an awful way with them as officials. No wonder the Spanish, even in an old Spanish harbour, felt nervous.

At last the ship is free and moves upon the silken water towards the palm trees and the white houses and the brigantines and schooners and sailing-boats beside the shore. Negroes all in white, with fat cigars in their mouths, handle our luggage, and in ten minutes the passengers are dispersed to hotels and their homes.



## II. PORTO RICO

PORTO RICO was discovered by Columbus in 1493, and he entered the port of San Juan, naming it San Juan de Porto Rico—St. John of the Fine Harbour; hence the name of the island itself—Porto Rico. The Indians there were in a low state of civilisation and showed little sign of wealth. The island seems at first to have presented less interest than its neighbours: Santo Domingo became the beloved of Columbus, Cuba became the chief Spanish base for exploration and conquest. Porto Rico enjoyed therefore comparative peace for sixteen years after its fatal discovery. Then came Ponce de Leon, and after him plunderers and pacificators with sword and hemp; killing, ravishing, enslaving. The despoiling of the Indians of their gold and jewels was followed by dispossession of their lands and then the capture of their persons for the slave trade. Ships were fitted out in Cuba, with the sole mercantile objective of capturing the Indians of the islands and selling them into bondage.

Slaving may have proved profitable, but in the long run it was unpractical. The Indians entirely disappeared, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century were reported to Spain as

extinct. There were no longer enough servile hands to do the hard work. So in place of the lost Indians the Spanish colonists felt forced to import Africans.

The Negro slaves thrived under conditions which killed Indians; they increased, and the Spaniards mixed their blood with them and bred from them. Hence the large Negroid population of the Indies at this day.

The same happened in Darien, Panama, Costa Rica—Negroes largely displaced Indians. In Mexico, however, Africans were not imported to any extent, as the Indians, though rebellious, were in large numbers and there were many tribes accustomed to slavery.

The Spaniards settled Porto Rico, and grew sugar and bananas, which they brought over from the Canaries, and tobacco, which was indigenous. They lived in a humdrum state, taxed of course, interfered with a great deal by Spanish governors, but generally enjoying the wealth and ease of a luxuriant tropical island—thus for three centuries, when suddenly all the Spanish colonies followed the example of the North American *démarche* and endeavoured to throw off the yoke of the mother-country. Mexico, Guatemala, Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, all gained their freedom before 1825. Porto Rico fought for three years and failed (1821–1823). Spain remained in possession. Fifty years later slavery was abolished. The free republics of Central America had abolished it in 1824. How-

ever, in 1873 the Negroes of Porto Rico became free Spanish subjects. In 1897 Porto Rico even obtained Home Rule under a Spanish Governor-General. But next year came the war between the United States and Spain, and Porto Rico was annexed by the Northerners.

Cuba had also failed in 1823, and for the rest of the century remained disaffected. The Cuban is of a much more violent disposition than the Porto Rican. Cuba has never been wholly in a state of peace and contentedness since it was discovered. A widespread guerilla warfare lasted from 1868 to 1878, and in 1895 Maximo Gomez led another revolutionary war. By that time, despite constant unrest, foreigners had acquired considerable property in Cuba. There were American, British, and French planters, besides Spanish ones. Naturally, in a state of civil war, as in Mexico during 1910-1920, there was much damage done to foreign property. At this the United States took umbrage.

On February 15, 1898, the U.S. battleship *Maine* blew up in the harbour of Habana. The Spaniards say it blew up accidentally; the American impression given in the American press was that the Spaniards, to whom the presence of the vessel was thought to be distasteful, had blown it up on purpose. Others think the Cubans blew it up to instigate the war. On the other hand, some Cubans aver that the Americans themselves blew it up—but that is not credible. Probably it was an accident.

But this was the spectacular event which an

emotional public needed. Like the hauling down of the Flag at Fort Sumter in 1861, like the supposed onslaught of the Mexican army upon the forces of General Taylor in 1846, the sinking of the *Maine* was just what was needed to rouse the democracy of the North to war. An ultimatum was presented to Spain.

Spain must make immediate peace in Cuba. Spain was very polite and promised to do what she could. But the war feeling demanded more. On April 19, 1898, the United States Congress voted that Cuba was henceforth an independent state, and called upon Spain to give up Cuba. Next day the Spanish Ambassador left Washington, and there was war.

In the arbitrament of force Spain stood no chance. There were a few months of one-sided warfare, and the honour of Spain was satisfied. Spain faced her challenger, shots were exchanged, Spain was wounded and retired from the field. Cuba was given liberty. Porto Rico was annexed.

Does one need to stress the annexation of Porto Rico? Is it worth while inquiring whether the Porto Ricans should also have been given their liberty? Perhaps not, generally speaking, as the government of states and empires goes on to-day. Porto Rico has only a million and a quarter inhabitants, is only 3400 square miles in extent. But I stress the annexation in this study because it seems specially important in the development of the *power* of the United States of North America.

The Spaniards took Porto Rico for greed. No tears need be shed on them. The United States did not take it over from that motive. But it was a step forward in her quest of power. The Castilian flag went down—the flag of the quest for gold. The American flag went up—the flag of the quest of power.

San Juan de Porto Rico is a gay and pretty little city, without crime, without dirt, and without much poverty. Revolvers are not fired promiscuously. Heaven's water-carts lay the dust each afternoon. There is a luxurious American hotel, and Spanish ones which are less luxurious. You eat to music, and can be fed in airy restaurants by eager Italians. Babbitt orders his "stacks" of hot cakes and soft-boiled eggs for breakfast; Francisco Morales sits down meekly to coffee and a small roll. The well-fed broad-faced business men of the States walk with india-rubber step—happy tubby Texans, lordly lumps of Louisiana. The tropic, which dries the Spaniard, does not reduce the North American. The young men are clean-cut and handsome, but soon sag, owing to lack of exercise and the habit of bathing in hot water instead of cold. The Porto Rican is not so dependent on a car, eats less, and certainly bathes less, be it in hot or cold. You know the ex-Spaniard by his spare form and swarthy complexion. The Spanish sombrero is being chased off the island by standard American hats; likewise the Spanish shirt by the more expensive silk shirt of the American workingman. The blue overalls or "slops" of the

labourer are also common. It is difficult to buy an article of attire which is of local manufacture and style; even Panama hats, it appears, have to be sent to New York and re-exported. Inter-island trade is very scanty; once a month a small Dutch cargo-boat arrives from Jamaica, but it seems to bring very little.

Characteristic of modern San Juan is the barber-shop with its striped pole revolving in glass case; there the Spaniards getting their hair cut have their necks shaved also and a bareness left above the ears; and having "gotten" a shave, they get a hot towel also pressed upon their brows and temples.

Truly, as you stand on the quay and watch the ferry-boats, modelled on those of the Hudson River, go screaming across the harbour, you feel there is some justification for the saying that San Juan is a miniature New York.

One thing, however, it lacks, and that is an adequate number of "shoe-shine parlours." Like the Bedouins who have a monopoly of the visitors to the Sphinx, so a tribe exists in San Juan who hold the blacking-brush to the world. When an imperial race arrives there is great competition among the natives as to who shall clean their boots. The tribe especially swarms around the town square, which, banked with flora and shaded with luxuriant palms, might otherwise be a pleasant place of rest. Even at night, after supper, when the town band is playing to a flocking crowd under a dreaming moon, you are treated to a sort of jazz interposition of "Shine! Shine! Shine!"

The voices of the street-urchins and news-vendors have the same quality of voice as those of Cadiz. Boy babies come forth of their mothers' womb howling "Demokratia." The stones of the high houses repeat their cries. But there are no parrots shouting on the streets of San Juan. There used to be; for Spanish sailors brought them. But in some streets of Cadiz one might have thought there was a riot, what with the newsvendors below and the parrots in the upper storeys. Coming direct from Cadiz one noticed many divergencies in the detail of life. For instance, Cadiz had no cinemas; San Juan had five or six showing all the Californian stars. In Cadiz there were several theatres with dancing and singing. In San Juan there was only one—with a visiting Spanish artist. In Cadiz no one rocks or swings on a verandah. In San Juan, on the other hand, there are no bull-fights. Most of what bound the island to Spain has been now cut. Only a few educated people know who is King of Spain.

Out in the country, however, life is more definitely Spanish and American influence is less felt. The Negro life is greater there and seems to relate neither to Spain nor to America. It hardly seems to relate to Africa either.

The Negroes live in saffron- and marine-coloured boxes little bigger than bathrooms, and what they crowd into these cabins makes them like Noah's-arcs with all the toy furniture and animals inside. You'll see them stuck right in the midst of a swamp with thousands of land

crabs crawling on the tips of their claws and feeling in the air with their portentous extra talons.

The mangoes hang their fruits like tassels. The palm trees rise up like vast lissom feminine forms swathed to the waist and then bright naked to their matted heads, where cluster their giant nuts. The banana palms bask in solar radiance and hot mist; and last year's shabby sugar plantation stretches for a mile of bashed canes and sprawling withered leaves. And naked children improvise a throb of music with a tin-tray band, while others dance to it a natural shimmy shake.

Living among the coloured folk are poor white Spanish Porto Ricans on quite an equal basis, and their pale babies run about in the sun, too, and only are not musical and do not dance. The grown girls, white and black, are beautiful creatures, dazzling with their bright dresses, their vitality, and their unthwarted curves. The Negro men are finer than the Spanish ones, however, and naturally a long way simpler. I never saw Negro men so happy and untroubled as here—the Negro without a complex, without the blues.

Nearby goes the military high-road, hard and straight, and along it hoot America's cars. The little island is traversed by a whole series of magnificent roads, of great value from the point of view of war, but now a happy means of touring the country. The automobile parade from Packard to Ford goes past before your eyes, and beside private cars fly strings of little motor-buses, all packed with people. Each bus has a name,



and that adds greatly to the amusement of the road. Thus we have "*Coney Island*," "*Cristobal Colon*," and "*Excuse my Dust*," and "*Maria Luisa*," and a hundred more. These are worked by the Spanish-speaking people for Spanish-speaking people. You will seldom meet an American in one. I found afterwards in Colon and Mexico City, in Santo Domingo and Port au Prince and other places, these converted Ford trucks swarm, and are a great if risky means of locomotion. The Porto Rican wagonettes are if anything quieter in their demeanour than the Mexican ones. So they scour the ways from ports and tobacco-towns, over the low ranges of tree-covered sugar-loaf mountains, to other towns and ports and villas and resorts. When far away on the verdure-covered hills they show where the roads are by their turbulent dust.

You see almost the whole range of class life in Porto Rico from bottom to the broad top, from yellow wooden cabin to the latest type of American home. For Whites an American standard of life has been set. Rich as the island is, and simple and remote, the artificial prices of New York, nevertheless, range. Your room at the hotel, with bath and telephone, will cost you three to five dollars a day. You will sit down to the characteristic breakfast of grape-fruit, ham and eggs, corn cakes, and coffee. Ice and water continually tinkle in glasses. Yonder is the ice-cream soda bar. The suit-pressers are all busy keeping proper creases in the breeches of the islanders. American men, wearing their white suits and linen

collars, look smarter than the Porto Ricans, and the women, if quieter in looks, at least keep to the fashions.

Business of course is king. You feel that, at every turn, by the look of the advertisements and the trend of the talk. Porto Rico hums as it has never hummed before. It goes. It is a real live place. The dominant spirit of the Anglo-Saxon has overcome the gentle, sluggish conservatism of old Spain. Rich Porto Ricans—and there are many of them—live in luxury, in beautiful villas with every possible means of material happiness—books, baths, electric light, fans, tiled floors, perfect mosquito-nets, and the whitest sheets and the softest of pillows. And the water is pure and the drains are good—thanks in great part to a quarter of a century of ownership and exploitation by the U.S.A.

The material benefit which has come to Porto Rico through annexation is considerable. In 1901 she was included within the American tariff union and all her products could enter American harbours duty free. She entered the American postal unity. The American dollar became her unit of currency. American traders taught Porto Rican middlemen how to make money, and American planters from Louisiana showed the proper way to raise sugar. The annual output of sugar has been increased to ten times what it was in 1898.

On the other hand, there are material and political disadvantages. Though Porto Rico has free trade with America she has it not with the rest

of the world. A high tariff excludes European goods. Spanish America has profited immensely by cheap German wares. But the Fordney tariff keeps them out of Porto Rico. Porto Rico pays excessively for scores of articles and commodities which she could otherwise import cheaply from France and Spain, to say nothing of England. Prohibition of wines and spirits is said to have been achieved by local option—but if so, it was before the population was able to vote. Trial by jury is not given in Porto Rico. Porto Ricans are citizens of the U.S.A. by virtue of the Jones Act of 1917. They were enabled to be conscripted for the Army. But they do not have the power to vote. They are represented in the United States Congress only by a Commissioner. They have no Senator. They have no part in electing the President.

Now there has sprung up what may be called a Porto Rican Sinn Fein movement, featured in a concerted attack on the Administration. Many Americans now advocate "Statehood" for Porto Rico. But the Porto Ricans clamour for independence. Porto Rico is in the anomalous condition of belonging to the U.S.A. but not being a state or governed by the Constitution. She is a possession. And the general Spanish discontent which rules in Cuba, Haiti, and Santo Domingo, outcrops in Porto Rico also. Just as the popular song, "Es mi hombre," which tires the ears in Madrid, has gone through these islands and is no doubt ravaging Mexico and all the mainland, so the one insurgent Spanish emotion has infected

all the islanders. And in Porto Rico, journalists in the newspapers and street orators in the squares are flirting with the idea of a revolt. The street politicians seemed very nervous when any one looking like an American came near.

It is difficult to know what test to apply to the institutions of Porto Rico, where, for instance, trial by jury cannot be claimed. If the test of empire, the trouble would be hardly worth considering; but if the test of Lincolnian democracy, the Porto Ricans have grievances which could be removed. The removal would take little effort. The island is well governed, civilised, and prosperous. Given her independence, it is all too likely that her present happiness would fall away from her.

### III. SANTO DOMINGO AND HAITI

#### I.

OVER the sea in a tiny boat to the island of Haiti, and to the eastern half of it which is called Santo Domingo. The voyage is still westward and along the eighteenth parallel, and not for long out of sight of land, be it the northern shore of Porto Rico or the southern shore of Santo Domingo. The sea reeks with warm exhalations, and in the turgid water lurk sharks. Don't fall off the ship as she lurches and rolls and you hold to the ropes—you may not be saved if you do!

Twenty-four hours brings you to the little tropic river where the massed palm trees with their bushy heads peep forth out of the jungle at the intruder. And we slush slowly along the banks through the heat to a jaded-looking dock and some clammy warehouses, and behold, it is the capital of the Dominican Republic!—I suppose one of the meanest and dirtiest capitals in the world. Yonder is the Government Building, on which flies the white-crossed flag of the Republic, and level with it the Stars and Stripes of the United States. For the Republic has the brokers in. She borrowed heavily and unwisely, and then

could not pay—and so the customs were seized, and, with the customs, government itself. Santo Domingo is now virtually an American possession and part of the new empire which is springing into being and promising to condition the future of the American people. On a little hill outside the city is a training camp with its motto picked out in white stones in an attractive pattern: "In time of Peace, prepare for War." And one wakens in the morning to the strains of "The Star-spangled Banner," played somewhere afar.

Down by that tropic little river stands the stump of Columbus's tree, the actual tree to which the discoverer moored his ship when he came in on that morning of the 5th of December 1492, and was met by the amazed tribesmen. Nine months ago it was still a living tree, and it is part of the grievance of the Dominicans that the marines tried to preserve it for all time by cutting it open and filling its hollow centre with cement. That killed it. But it is a mighty burly stump, some fifteen feet high and of great girth. It sprawls rather, it has a burly moving shoulder and a bearded aspect that suggests a sort of Rip Van Winkle Christopher Columbus, enchanted for four hundred and thirty years and now stepping ashore.

What a change for the old man to see! Those chiefs, those red men and women who gave jewels for beads, all killed to the last child two hundred years ago. Africans are in their place, smooth and black, everywhere, as if they had come and conquered it. But they came as slaves and then

won their freedom from Spanish and from Frenchmen. Some speak Spanish, some speak bits of French. Farther on, in Haiti, all speak French. Where are the bold Spanish with their flashing eyes and flashing blades, their wills, their lusts? Gone like the great trees of the riverside. Gone like the Indians. Gone like the French who came after them. Mixed and married with the Negroes, or else gone soft and gentle as Orientals.

“These strapping fellows, these giants in sand-coloured clothes?” Columbus might ask. “American soldiers,” you would reply, and then conduct the poor old wight to the Carnegie Library and the shelves of the *Encyclopaedia Americana*. It needs some explaining. Discovering America was child’s play compared with explaining to Columbus the rise of the American Republic of the north.

Anyhow, here I am at the Hotel Inglaterra, and down below me is a bar where there is “beer on ice” and the “best old rum,” for Santo Domingo has not been made dry, and there sit marines all in white and argue it over their pots. The question is: “Do not the Haitians eat their children at the age of five—not all of them, of course, but selected kids at festivals? Do not the outlaws and brigands of Santo Domingo need to be stamped out? Or again, Who has prior rights in the Panama Canal? Do not British warships come through without paying dues while American ones pay? Are not all vessels towed by electric mules through the canal?” They

bet millions of dollars, they bet their adjectival shirts, because they know.

Outside is the city market-place, where are sold live crabs and tortoises on strings, and mangoes and gourds and cocoanuts, and sugar-candy babies on wire. And black girls with coral ornaments and various-coloured turbans or kerchiefs do the selling—while purchasers on asses, on backs of calves, or walking with huge bundles on their heads, go past. The black people laugh and shout. It doesn't seem to mean much to them that they have no President and that their Republic is in abeyance. They do not bet on what is going to happen, and they do not know. When you buy an orange for a cent they say to you "*Grand merci*" and are ever so pleased. In the square is a fine statue of Cristobal Colon, who points west by south-west to Latin-America, bidding all men still think of a new world. But I am forgetting. Did I not leave him in the Library with the Encyclopaedia? Is it not there, on the shelf, that he will find his true place, in a history that is past?

## II.

Though at first sight the population of the capital of the Dominican Republic may strike the traveller as being wholly black, there are nevertheless a number of persons of fairer complexion—the people of the first families, the *aristokratia*. One or two of these are German. These keep within their houses more than do the Negroes,



who trade and traffic and gossip in market-place and main street.

The island has a bad history. Columbus loved it as the first large materialisation of his dream of a beyond, a trans-Atlantic land. But the Spaniards raised Cain there, and the Negroes and French raised him again. The Indians were killed off early, and the Spaniards were soon killing one another. Bandits and pirates have lived there more securely than any one else.

It was in 1697 that the French came in. Spain ceded half the island to her. The French bred in rapidly with the coloured people. The country became known as Haiti, and French was the spoken tongue. French Negro slaves in considerable numbers were imported. A hundred years later the rest of the island was ceded to France. That was in the Napoleonic era. England was at war with Spain, and in 1809 British warships stood off the little tropic harbour and gave encouragement to an uprising of Spanish colonists, who proved successful in wresting the city from the French. By the Treaty of Paris in 1814 French rule was confined to the eastern part of the island—Haiti.

There came then speedily the great liberation movement of Latin-America (1821-25). Santo Domingo was able to succeed where Porto Rico failed. But hardly had the new Republic proclaimed its independence when the Negroes of Haiti descended upon it and broke it up. Haiti by that time had also won independence. For nearly a quarter of a century the Haitians re-

mained in control of the whole island. In 1844 a Dominican insurrection was successful, but there was no peace with Haiti, who seems to have been always the stronger power. Santo Domingo was forced to try to return to the bosom of Spain. In 1861 the President of the Republic became Governor, and the Republic joined Spain. Two years later war against Spain was started, and in 1865 the Republic was restored. In 1868 the Republic tried to join the United States, but America was not then willing. Insurrectionary movements followed one another with rapidity till the Negro General, Ulysses Heureux, obtained control of the country. He, it is said, pursued the policy later adopted by Lenin in Russia of having all his enemies killed; but he himself did not escape, and was assassinated at last. It is said he ran the Republic very deeply into debt. One wonders why financiers should have been willing to lend money to such a state. Some five millions sterling were owing; later it became six and a half millions. There was talk of foreign intervention. Some European Power might have felt entitled to seize the country.

American policy had, however, somewhat changed. In 1899 the United States entered into possession of Porto Rico and into control of Cuba. Santo Domingo was one half of the island that lay between. Rather than see a foreign Power installed, America decided to control Santo Domingo also.

The Republic was asked if she still required aid from Washington, and the United States

agreed to control the customs, organise receipts, pay interest on debts, and pension the Government. This she has done very effectively, and remains in economic and military control to-day, Santo Domingo with a constitution in suspended animation having become an American Protectorate.

Apparently now most Dominicans would like the Americans to go, but they have no power to make them. The Americans for their part can point justifiably to the improved conditions on the island. If they went, the human dog-fight would begin anew. However, let us to the country!

### III.

I have heard it said in London that those who live in half-houses are the aristocrats of the slums. The quaint expression may also be applied to the coloured folk who live in cabins. They are the black aristocracy of the islands. It was in vain that I pitied the plight of the dwellers in the marine and saffron-coloured dolls' houses of Porto Rico. The real under-dog of these parts does not pretend to any little wooden hut. He lives gregariously in the bush like the larvae of the Lackey Moth. He squats in the shadow and shine of tattered palm branches; he is rustling with his family just beyond the green fans of the wild bananas. In crossing the island of Haiti only two things share the attention—the magnificence of untamed nature and the wildness of man.

Not that the men and women have relapsed to primitive savagery. They are fully dressed, as fully as any one could care to be, and, except for little children, seem to be afraid of nakedness. In Russia, in some parts, you may see scores of men, women, and children promiscuously naked upon a river bank; but the wild children of the sun of Haiti will not even bathe in the sea unless discreetly covered. In the Africa whence they came they wore little more than a *cache-sexe*, but the slaves learned a decorum of dress from the Spaniard in the old Colonial days, and it has remained.

They are very civil, too, and talk to you willingly in a French patois or in a broad Spanish which is far from the Spanish of Madrid. But they are poor, live largely on fruit, have none of the amenities of life, and, being exposed to the tropical heat, they are also exposed to the exhalations of the jungle and to its insects. They are magnificent specimens of the human race till disease touches them. What erect and beautiful women, what positively Adam-like men! My eyes fed on many pictures of human perfection. But, alas for disease! Smallpox rages among them. You see beautiful boys and girls the colour of the mahogany trees amongst which they live, but all blurred and shadow-marked as if there were a fault in the tissue. And when one of them dies he is just buried somewhere at the back, like a dog or a cat.

Little smallpox-stricken girls with the disease still on them come up with bunches of bananas

or mangoes for sale, their open faces looking out from a hundred of disease-eyes. It makes the heart ache, and also prompts the thought—what a place for a medical missionary!

The island swarms with bandits. There is only one road across it, and that was opened only a month before. Its interior is extremely obscure, unvisited, and uncontrolled. It offers in an otherwise unqualified way a divine adventure for a young doctor willing to devote his life to human beings.

Personally, I do not believe the stories of moral depravity, the cannibalism, which is said to have broken out among the people. They are not so starved as that. They have not been exploited in the way the people of the other islands have. Cubans will eat one another before Haitians. But they get married without going to church, it is true, and have children who remain unbaptized. Otherwise they are "good Catholics," some of the best I have seen. There is no doubt about it—the inside of a church, where there is a church, is one of the best social scenes in Haiti. The women may often go in uncovered, and the holy-water bowl be dry, or the worshippers may not know when or how to cross themselves—but the loveliness and simplicity of service are in utter contrast to the world outside, to the jungle, and to the ordinary ways of men and women.

You sit in a vast sky-blue church in the evening and watch the children, with chaplets in their hair and garlands of flowers in their hands, and listen to the Spanish singing. And girls all in white go

up to the Madonna with armfuls of flowers and, throwing their heads and their breasts to her, yearn to her and gesticulate and perorate and fling down their flower-sacrifices and go. And the priest lights the incense over the flower-heaped altar so that every blossom smokes upwards to the Virgin's feet.

Oh, to live in that atmosphere always and be at peace ! You realise the sweet emotion, though you know that character and the world's reactions forbid that you shall take it far.

I stayed at a pleasant city called Santiago of the Gentlemen. The Americans call it Santiago of the bandits, but it seemed to be a brighter city than the capital, having more pretensions to civilisation. The steel mosquito gratings on the verandahs of the hotel were commendable. How can one enjoy one's days when the mosquitoes chase you all night!

It would, however, be vain to seek in the island of Haiti the comforts and conventions of Porto Rico. The United States is in control, but it is proving more difficult to introduce new ways of living. The mahogany-coloured chambermaids of the hotel smoke heavy black cigars as they work, and every time Yokine, who waits on me, wants to light up afresh she makes an errand to my room for the matches beside my candlestick. My bedroom is just a section of a dormitory divided off by wooden partitions. The bed is surmounted by a high-domed mosquito-netting cage, which is a room in itself once you are inside.

There is no such thing as a "room with a bath" on the island. Round the corner from the verandah is a mildewed douche which drops water on your back in beneficent but not abundant trickles. It is not entirely private, and you should keep your eyes on two doors whilst you wash. And there are sometimes other occupants beside yourself—to wit, the giant roach and his family. Father Roach is very fond of water, and when you turn on the shower he also comes forth to share in the splash.

In other parts of the hotel the roaches are portentous. One tries to find a likeness for them. They are like those old-fashioned brown metal trunks, a little reduced in size. The sideboard in the dining-room might be the grand terminal station of some city of the gnomes, and drawn up outside it are a score of brown cabs, some waiting, some moving.

Or if they are not cabs they are little brown pups. The waiters treat them brutally, but I feed them from my plate and they make off with a bit of bread or a quiver of Spanish omelette as readily as cat or dog.

I see little lizards also running up the dining-room wall. The most interesting extra gentleman lodger, however, is the tropical spider. He is not gigantic but gigantesque, as big as the palm of a child's hand—speedy, audacious, voracious. He lives not in a web but on a wall, on a series of walls, and no other spider dare stay on it with him for a couple of minutes. Ah, here he comes, sprawling over the dusty map of the island of

Haiti hanging in the hall. A Dominican politician smiles and points at him, and would whisper something about military government of which he sees a symbol.

There is a steady malice against Americans, and as I am English the other guests of the hotel open their hearts. They take pleasure in scratching crosses on the figure of Liberty on the American money. Their own money has largely disappeared, but a fine coin the size and appearance of a silver dollar is now reckoned as only twenty cents. They say it is intrinsically worth forty cents, and that an American bank collected some millions of them, took them to New York, and sold them at a large profit. There are two great banking institutions on the island; one is American, the other is the Royal Bank of Canada. The Dominicans assure me they place all their business with the Royal Bank. They say that the dollar has impoverished them because it has raised the cost of living so terribly. They retaliate by using the British bank.

I imagine that may be so, as I pay forty cents for a half-bottle of Hamburg beer. It could not have cost more than four cents in Hamburg at that time. The dinner is very simple: no French flourishes of cuisine, no Spanish traditions either, but there is enough—three beef courses and then guava jelly and coffee. And for this you pay what you would at Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo. Or you may pay more.

I am told by Dominicans that the Republic in bondage is doing so well that the 1908 bonds



due in 1958 will probably be paid off in 1925, and the 1918 bonds due in 1938 would be paid this year (1924). There is a certain new artificial prosperity. It is due to the fact that the inhabitants have been forced to think in dollars and cents, and cease thinking in pesos and gramos. But the Dominican, it seems, will not take the blessing of peace and prosperity into account when it is balanced against political liberty.

I go out to the promenade of the town. I see the lonely American soldiers sitting bored on the park seats, and not one of them with a girl or a chum.

"No one will go with them," says a Dominican. "We don't feel anything against them personally, we know they are only sent by their Government and have to obey. But we are against their Government and always shall be till they go."

This was spoken by one of the white Spanish aristocracy who are now endeavouring to organise a passive boycott in the island.

Santiago of the Gentlemen is Santiago of the ladies also. Behold, a remarkable festival takes place which brings the ladies forth in all their finery. The *fiesta* is in honour of the new road which has joined city with city. After four hundred years Santiago has been connected with the capital by a road. Up till May of this year there was only an adventurous horseman's trail. But due to the hustling U.S.A. the hundred and seventy kilometres between Santiago and the city of Santo Domingo has been bridged. Hence-

forth it is undignified to be seen on a horse—only the poor people, the Blacks, the beggars, go on horses. All people who are people go in Ford cars. The super-hooters tear along the highway, and the sultry mango trees drooping with their fruit look as if civilisation were dawning on them at last. And the snakes that would bask on the way have learned of a new fast-going enemy that roars like a lion and bumps over them like an elephant and yet flies past like an eagle.

The worthies of the city have issued the most grandiosely worded invitations to the Capitalaños to a three-days general “at home,” banquet, and ball. It is a good idea. Santiago is up in the fresher air, a wind is always blowing. The mosquitoes are fewer and the nights are cool. Indeed, the ladies of the capital carry fur wraps in the evening, when the temperature drops to about 70. Not that any one walks anywhere by day. It is much too hot for that, and they look at me from their cars and stare if I set off for the river on foot. Many people wear green or yellow sun spectacles, which look quaint against a dark complexion. The light is not, however, so glaring as in Egypt or Central Asia, and the heat seems much easier to bear.

I have come to the conclusion that life on these tropical islands can be very good all the year round. The heat does not devitalise one, though something in the air seems to whisper that nothing in the whole world is of any importance. Those who come to Santo Domingo soon feel the “lure,” and are ready to stay there

for ever. I watched the routine of the American soldiers at the white and antique "Fortaleza de San Luis," and the sentries standing languidly but happily, with their bayonets smiling in the sun, and I saw the dreamy look in their eyes, though they were not dreaming of home. Drink, however, seems to be a strong temptation. I saw one never-sober warrant officer who was just drinking himself to death; an educated man, too, who boasted comically that he had been "exposed for two years to Cornell." America has not enforced the Dry Law in Domingo nor in Haiti. She has not suggested it in Cuba, though it holds in the zone of her territory in Panama and it has been hinted at in Northern Mexico.

The *fiesta*, however, means but little to the garrison. It means more to every one than to them. Down below the earth-bastion of the fortress and the deep gun-emplacements foams the broad and fresh-flowing Rio, and black and brown children are floating in it like luscious fruits, and there are crimson-foliaged trees beside the broad beach, where scores of donkeys and ponies with panniers are waiting for water. Every pannier holds two petrol cans, and when the cans are filled the boys squat across them and beat the donkeys up the long hill to the town, and then hawk the water from street to street. Thus, here as in old Spain, water-selling is a trade. And the ladies of the capital need water to wash off the dust, and the boys make double profits.

On all street corners the Dominican flag is flying, and a marvellous unwonted animation has

possession of the people. Bands are playing, horns being blown; halls are being festooned with flowers. Santiago begins to look a gay resort. Toledo in Spain has no cinema, but Santiago has two, with bi-serial releases from New York and a fitting fadeaway for "Blood and Sin." Santiago has its shady and pleasant drinking saloons, and "Eden" with its annexe.

The male guests at night, wearing evening dress, or at least black coats and white ties, all look very dapper. The grown women look stupendous. Imagine them in strawberry-pink, three times as stout as a stout woman, and with loose girdles about imaginary waists. But the young women, on the contrary, are slight, dainty, with latticed sleeves and jewelled bird-combs in their hair.

They will dance till they drop, no matter what the heat. It is oppressive enough at eight, but the ball lasts till four in the morning, beginning very quietly with waltzes and ending on sex-dances. At midnight the town orchestra gives way to a Cuban band, which beats a tom-tom for hours. In comes the drum like a storm and then subsides, or it mounts upon the music like some big-cheeked black man getting upon an elephant in front of an army, while on each side of him are pagan heralds blowing dissonances on horns.

Next day after this orgy the faces of the women were a wreck, which no powder or cosmetic would disguise. Yet one of them told me that she belonged to a party club of thirty families, where they took it in turn to invite all the others.

“ At my house I have a hundred and fifty guests, all day, all night,” said she to me.

The *fiesta*, as in other Spanish countries, is a sort of national institution.

#### IV.

I was not fortunate enough to be present at a fête on the French part of the island—the Republic of Haiti—but I obtained the impression that the Haitians are much wilder than the Dominicans. The Negroes do not readily identify their needs; they are more ebullient, more pious, and I should say more haunted by a prehistoric past, than are the Spaniards.

Nothing is more serene, more utterly sweet, than Mass as sung in the great Cathedral at Port au Prince. But the scene outside the Cathedral for a square mile is primitive in the extreme. It is like the low suburbs of Nizhni Novgorod in Fair-time, massed together and increased.

Port au Prince is built widely on a sun-bathed strand, and looks more like a capital city than Santo Domingo. A few khaki-clad Americans meet the eye, but the black population is too striking for one to consider Americans long. It seems as if the peasantry swarm into the city every day to market their produce. And what a peasantry! It would be impossible to match them. They seem to have all the salient characteristics of the Southern French, and of the Africans also. Their old-world, alert, shrewd, rough-hewn faces, their wit and mirth, their

clamorous, noisy French patois, their gay cottons and classical faces, the frankly exposed bare breasts of the women—all these tell of a people of force.

Unfortunately, owing to the calling of “dry” American ships, there is a good deal of vice. Champagne is brought to the quay, and the thirsty, indiscriminate passengers and crew knock the tops off the bottles and pour it down their throats like lemonade. The concomitants of drunkenness are all at hand. Possibly in no port in the world will a man, will any man, receive such attentions from women, be he even a sombre-visaged missionary. The black girls swarm about you and fight for you.

But this may be overlooked, though I am surprised the American authorities tolerate it. Probably the soldiers like it. But Haiti is sad because she is denied her liberty by the United States. The coloured people all over the world have a legitimate pride in their two independent states, Liberia and Haiti. There is no reason why Haiti should not be left to govern herself according to her lights and temperament, no reason except that Haiti furnishes a new field for exploitation. It is a place in which a good deal of money could be made if the population could be tamed.

But the people are too numerous and too fierce—they are in a way indomitable. The French blood is vigorous in them. The Americans have tried forced labour, gangs working in irons guarded by armed men, and they have shot

several thousands. Indeed, they have behaved towards the Haitans as the Spaniards before them did towards the original Indians. They have made a beginning of that kind in Haiti. I would venture to suggest that Haiti is not a practical possession for an idealistic democracy. The political conceptions on which America has grown will never be adopted by the black French.

v.

The time came for me to move on from an extremely interesting island. I wished a passage to Vera Cruz or Jamaica or Colon, but the chance of small vessels sailing adventitiously seemed to determine my way. I went to Puerto Plata and thence to Santiago de Cuba, of Cortes memory: city of which he was Mayor, city which provided much of the capital for his adventure to Mexico.

Here is Puerto Plata, on the northern shore of Santo Domingo, the Spanish-speaking part: Puerto Plata, the Plate port, a fine ocean harbour where no doubt rested often the treasure-ships of the Plate Fleet. Here is the place, one of the places, but where—where are the galleons of Spain?

There stands the British steamer *Teviot*, loading tons of cigar tobacco for Marseilles, all astir with British sailors, while up at her mast-head three green parrots are pecking at one another and conversing, or edging off along the taut ropes. Over beyond is the Yankee freighter *Dorothy*, attended by waist-naked Negroes and

barges of fruit. A streaming smoke on the horizon and a long-distance hooting tell of an incoming hulk of the reappearing Hamburg-Amerika line. Two little Norwegian tramps have been and gone. The fast American mail steamer from New York will come gliding in to-morrow. Spanish cripples creep aboard the ships in the harbour to show their sores, their withered legs and arms; Spanish Negro peddlers squat on the stone pier with bunches of mangoes, pineapples, and cocoanuts. The town grasshoppers come pottering along with their wooden boxes to black the boots of sailors, and all the English they know is "Wahn a shine?"

But the tall galleons and the flashing faces of Castile have vanished away like a mirage, like something unreal, that never was. So I sit in the port and wait. None of the ships will take me the way I want to go. The quickest and cheapest way to Mexico is, after all, via New York, I am told. And that is disconcerting. The galleons have all been sunk, and now one must go *via* New York.

But patience conquers civilisation. A little Spanish boat at length appeared, a mere toy beside its neighbours in the harbour, but going in the same old way of Spanish ships, owned by a Cuban company, commercial as the rest, bearing no banner of Castile over the ocean, and yet Spanish enough, Spanish of to-day.

On this I made a romantic voyage to Cuba. I realised for a moment once more the glamour of the days of the discoverers and the piratical



pioneers. The sea was like velvet, the hazy mountains were of ineffable grandeur; the ship scarcely moved, yet went on, went on, and the flying-fish, silver and gleaming, raced us as she circuited and curved and planed o'er the ocean.

I voyaged with Fabio Fiallo, the poet and patriot of Santo Domingo, and he poured into my ears the story of his country's wrongs. He had with him a fierce-looking peasant from the interior, Cuyo Baez, who took off his shirt to show me the rose-red efflorescences and brutal channels on his body where red-hot irons had been applied to him by torturers.

It was like an inverted picture from Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* and for a moment I could fancy I saw a British sailor victim of the Spanish Inquisition. I looked at the fierce, unforgiving, taciturn Cuyo, and then at the fine cultured face of Fiallo. How it would have stirred the blood if Cuyo had been Anglo-Saxon and had been thus treated by Spaniards! For our noble rage has an ignoble appetite—it feeds on atrocities, must have atrocities. But here was a Spaniard, alleged to have been tortured with hot irons by one of us, by an Anglo-Saxon. It was incredible.

Fabio Fiallo looked down into the depths of the tranquil sea and meditated, as if he were looking for the Spanish ships and Spaniards down below, and their banners and their crosses and the spoils of the Indies. He could not see them. He could only see the sharks following the boat.

The sailors came out with pistols and began

shooting at sharks. For when one shark gets killed the others feed on it and cease following the ship for a while. But it does not disturb the poet, nor the imperturbable Baez. They are thinking of all that is Spanish, hating all that is American, and they are sailing over the sea to stir up the Cubans and eventually to stir up Washington. Cuyo Baez will show his mutilated body to many, and, whether he was actually tortured by Anglo-Saxon or by one of Spanish blood, he will rouse inevitably passion and malice against the starry banner of the North.

The ship glides on, leaves Haiti, crosses the Windward Passage, labours through a long noon-tide over little waves, and in the afternoon comes "unto a land in which it seem'd always afternoon." And I went up into the peak of the prow of the ship and ceased to be on a Cuban merchantman. I had raised one of the lost galleons, and behind me were no moderns, but the clamorous, audacious mariners of the first days of the New World.

The treasure-ship drifts westward on a merely dimpled sea, and in the evening comes to the shelter of Cape Maysi. The sun sets in a lake of fire, and we traverse shadows of cloudlets instead of waves; and the shadows are blue, and then peacock blue with black circulating lines, like cobra's eyes, and then blood red, and then red gelatine, and then green. And from where in the mountains the sun made a lake of fire, a marvellous red brilliance has been enkindled, and great black radii shoot outward across bands of

red, glowing, burning colour. It is a dreadful and grandiose scene, the surface of the sea so calm and yet possessed of fast-wandering, circulating, wallowing colour reflections—the place of actual sunset meanwhile, far o'er the waves, made gigantic and romantic by the great black spokes of a wheel that is rolling through illimitable fires.

And the treasure-ship in the enchanted twilight goes on, goes on, with all the pulse of Castile behind it.

## IV. CUBA

### I.

THERE must be twenty thousand mendicant vendors of lottery tickets in Cuba, from ragged urchins to reputable grey-beards wearing straw hats and carefully creased trousers. These friars of chance know no shame, and are more persistent than bluebottles, coming to you five or six times after having been sent off. They shout the number of their series and whisk the red sheets in your face, knowing that you have no redress against them—for they are in a way Government servants, or at least Government commission agents. Every lottery ticket they sell helps the national exchequer of the Republic of Cuba. People buy—they have not the wills to stand out against such persistence. They vaguely hope to draw a lucky number—though they may have deep doubts of the honesty of the Administration.

But the quickest way to get rid of a lottery vendor is to cry in a loud voice: "*These are no good; these draw no prizes.*" That scares them. It is easy to buy a ticket for a lottery that has already been drawn. Besides that, there are forgeries and "unlucky numbers."

If there are twenty thousand ticket vendors there must be fifty thousand bootblacks on the island. Such a passion for blacking your boots! And then as many beggars. There are beggars of all ages, and as plentiful as in Moscow, and more active than the Russians. From the moment I arrived in Cuba, away in the east at Santiago, I was besieged by people wanting money. It was astonishing. I was sailing to a dream-island, to "the little lazy isle where the trumpet orchids blow," to a new world, to El Dorado, the golden one, to a verdant tropic land where God and the sun and the benevolent ever-freshening trade wind made work almost unnecessary and poverty impossible—Cuba, called the Pearl of the Antilles. And instead, I found a land made ugly and a people destitute and desperate.

At the dock in Santiago de Cuba, torn to this side and to that by the clamorous ragamuffins who wanted to carry my knapsack, and hung on to by beggars and lottery vendors at the same time, I plunged through dusty and filthy streets to the Plaza of this breathless commercialised city of which Cortes was first Mayor. Here stand two grandiose hotels, one of them called the Hotel Venus, surely an amusing name for would-be respectability. Both hotels are expensive. No provincialism of price holds here—dinner costs you five dollars.

Cuba has a southern coast reminding one of the southern coast of England where Santiago would be Southampton. Santiago is of great

strategic importance to the island, and its capitulation on July 17, 1898, ended the war with Spain. This southern coast faces Jamaica, from which it is distant less than two hundred miles. Habana on the northern coast is over five hundred miles distant, and is reached by a tenuous, rickety narrow-gauge railway. It may be said that this railway keeps to the worst of the island all the way—but that is because the railroad is naturally the artery of cane transport. Camaguey, about two hundred miles north-west of Santiago, is the centre of an immense sugar-planting area, of which the ox-teams drawing cane-trucks on caterpillar wheels through deep soft earth are most characteristic. The sinister-looking progress of war “tanks” along the alleys of the sugar plantations has a strange effect. Camaguey itself is such that no educated person would live there except for a short while, to make money. When you continue your journey to Santa Clara there is a good deal of improvement and more of the Spanish dignity of living. Habana, of course, is a well-shod city of pleasure of remarkable brilliance. Habana does not feel to be Cuba. It is the Coney Island of Key West, Florida.

## II.

Of course, it is possible to see Cuba in a more pleasant light. There is much glamour over Cuba if you half close your eyes. It is an ideal place for a wicked elopement. The hero of the Hergesheimer novel thither resorts. It is

certainly the place for a good cigar. Cuba has become a sportsman's island, the place *par excellence* where an American can get a drink. The characteristic sound of the towns is the rattle of ice in the inverted metal tumblers where the cocktail is coming to birth. The cocktail and the cigar are the first emblems of Habana. Then comes the Cuban girl *sans peur*, and then the gamblers' dice. Horse-racing and boxing and cock-fighting and betting and gambling are tremendous human interests—stronger in the Cuban than in the visiting American. Even the ice-cream vendors carry dice-boxes on their barrows and will "shake you for one" as soon as sell you straight.

You can go back and forth to Florida, not like Ponce de Leon, but by airplane in an hour or so. You read in the *Habana News* how over at Tampa the Floridans are trying to enforce even the blue law which makes the blues compulsory on Sundays, and you realise what a contrast the Cuban sporting resort affords.

Among many places of pleasure one stands out in my experience as both novel and fascinating, and that is the Galatea Lawn Tennis Club, on the Prado. Here is played all the evening and until late into the night a game of human roulette.

Gay lights adorn a pleasantly painted wooden structure, which possesses a doorway but no windows, and a rapturous thundering Cuban band clamours from the interior; men stroll in and out all the time as if it were a drinking saloon,

but there is nothing outside to indicate the nature of the entertainment. "Probably a cabaret with screened rooms and suppers and dancing girls," you surmise. But once inside you are aware that it is nothing of the kind.

Instead, behold a closed asphalt tennis-court and six beautiful girls in white with racquets. They play, and on all four sides, in tiers and in the gallery above, are men gloating upon the game. There is the greatest animation. Up on its perch rattles the band. Down below, at a series of counters, men are constantly buying tickets and going back to their seats. Negroes are going about collecting money and talking to men in the audience. The girls slash the balls, the bells on the top of the net tinkle, the men cheer. And there does not appear to be one woman among the spectators—they are all men. I turned to an American and asked what was the interest. Was it a tennis tournament?

He laughed.

"It's a betting camp; that's all there is to it," he replied.

I took a seat.

The girls were named Margot, Justine, Esther, Norma, Tosca, Nena, and their names in bright-coloured letters gleamed on the scoring-board. Before each girl's name was a square of colour to indicate her favour, and this corresponded to the colour of the ribbon girdle which each girl wore on her white dress. Margot was blue, Justine was white, Esther was red, Norma was green, Tosca was yellow, and Nena was brown.



Chalked on a panel of slate after each girl's name was the number of dollars and cents laid on her winning. And electric star lights showed the score, point by point.

I at once chose Margot as my favourite, not because of her play, but because of her style, her form, her glittering dark face. I imagine most newcomers did the same. For I soon realised that though she did not win she was a rapturous favourite of the men, who applauded every good stroke she made and were almost ready to leap over the nets with excitement when she was leading.

It was not the ordinary game of tennis, but one in which directly you lost a point you returned to your seat and gave way to the next in turn. The games were singles. Six points was the game. The scorer was mounted at a table on which were electric buttons, and when a girl won a point he pressed the corresponding button on the table and a star light appeared opposite her name on the scoring-board.

All the girls played well, but there was no winning or losing on service. The ball had to be bounced first and then struck over the net for the service. This precluded fast skidding services. After that the play was quick and clever and very fascinating, for each girl had a different style of play. And not one was so much better that you could be sure she would not at last miss a stroke. Frequently three of the girls would reach four points, and once all six stood level at four, and three got to five before steady little

Norma captured the sixth and took all the dollars which had been bet on the others and shared them with those who had bet on her.

It seemed to me there was a greater thrill and allurement than at a roulette table. For the figures of chance were not of ivory, but living and human. If you wished strongly enough you might make them win. But what of the girls themselves in this camp of betting men? They were always expressionless toward them. That was part of the fascination. No girl showed by her face that she knew any one of them or was interested in anything else but the game. And they never seem to tire, and the courts are never empty, and two girls are always playing. And the drums and horns of the band are clashing, and the Negro bookies are collecting the bets. Each man chooses his own little white goddess to win—six Galateas and six hundred Pygmalions, the Galatea Lawn Tennis Club.

### III.

Cuba is the largest and the richest of the West India islands, and has attracted more colonists, more financial capital, and more attention than the rest. It must be thought, however, that the Spaniards from the first were ill fitted to possess it. For from the time of the crafty and mean Velasquez, who wrought for the ruin of Cortes, until the Spanish-American War it is a pitiful history. Since that war the history of Cuba has had a problematical aspect.

In 1898 the United States made war on Spain to free Cuba and give her independence, not perhaps entirely grasping the fact that the disorders of Cuba were as much due to bad Cuban citizens as to bad Spanish governors. This, however, became rapidly clear to soldiers and administrators, and Cuba has never been given complete liberty and independence. Now and then, for a year or so, she has been given freedom on a string, but that is all.

American troops occupied the island till 1902 and began the great task of "cleaning it up." General Leonard Wood made his mark there as Governor. The measure of his efficiency is the measure of his unpopularity. There was a rumour last summer that he was returning, and the newspapers almost came out with black edges. But he eliminated a great deal of crime and also of disease during his regime.

In 1900 America prepared a constitution for Cuba, and chose the Cubans who were to adopt it. The President was to be chosen by an electoral college, the Senate by electoral colleges, and only the Congress by direct personal vote. In this way much scope was left to an outside power controlling the Presidency. The constitution was adopted in 1900, and next year the famous Platt amendment was dictated by the United States and signed by the Cuban Government.

The chief point of the amendment was that it forbade Cuba to enter into alliance or make treaty with any foreign Power if thereby her independence were impaired; it granted to the United

States certain coaling stations on the island; and it reserved to the United States the right to intervene in Cuban affairs at any time to protect life or property.

This proved almost too much even for the pocket politicians of Cuba, but they were unable to obtain any modification of the terms. A favourable President negotiated a strong commercial treaty in 1903, but the terms of the Platt amendment had caused a dissident movement which it was difficult to quell. The parties took to arms, and the pro-American President was forced to resign.

The constitution therefore had to be suspended. From 1906 to 1908 the island was occupied by the United States army. Charles Magoon became Governor of Cuba.

Then the Cubans were given another chance, and in 1907 the Liberal, Miguel Gomez, became President and the army was withdrawn. But almost at once Gomez' political following broke up, half of it demanding the withdrawal of the Platt amendment. There was much irregular fighting, the United States army was held in readiness, and American political influence was thrown on the side of the Cuban Conservatives. Their candidate for Presidency was satisfactory, and was elected in 1912.

The control of the country continued, with political storms. Cuba entered the World War with the United States, voted a considerable sum of money for it, and conscripted its adult male population. By Christmas 1918, if the war had

lasted so long, there would have been a Cuban army in the field. The Armistice was fortunate for Cuba.

After the war, sugar maintained a high price, but the Cubans hoarded their excellent crop and tried to hold up the world for a fortune. But ignorance of world-prices, tendencies, and power of recuperation misled the people. Even Americans failed to grasp the facts and thought prices could be kept up. In 1919 came the crash, when Cuba was forced to sell her sugar at a peace-time price. The United States in control declared a moratorium (January 1920), and the poverty-stricken country became blockaded by unsaleable American goods. Sixty million dollars of American merchandise poured into Cuba, but the consignees, not being able to meet the price, refused to accept delivery. That merchandise in large quantity still choked the warehouses of the chief ports in 1922. It has now been compulsorily evacuated, and much of it is to be seen in shops offered at a price which suggests bankrupt stock. So at least in March 1923, when I visited Habana a second time.

The planters and the middlemen were badly hit, but, as ever, the chief weight of the blow fell upon the labouring masses. Hence the poverty and misery of Cuba enduring in 1923 despite a new rise in the price of sugar. As regards the political situation, it is controlled by an American general and a council of financial experts. Budget estimates of Cuba have to be initialed by the United States before they may be passed. The

United States Government chooses who shall be President, and then makes sure that he is elected.

"Anyhow, our coming has done them all a lot of good," says an American planter. "You should have seen the place before we came."

"Yes," said I. "That is what I am trying to see."

"But the Cuban," says a banker, "is a man you can do nothing with. He's as crooked as a dog's hind leg."

"Look at them!" says another. "Thugs; rolling necks, low and brutal brows, searing eyes that dry up any dew they pass over; vicious to the last degree, shady, underhand, corrupt. They can't govern their country. They murder one another on the least pretext. All of them carry guns and knives."

There lies the way to an understanding of the predicament of the Cubans and of the peoples of Latin America. Their ways are essentially distasteful to the Anglo-Saxon. The blond Northerner feels a genuine instinctive moral mandate to "clean up" these peoples. His conscience is invulnerable—for his spoliatory business self is cased in the chain-mail of the moral mandate.

Though the Cuban is overtaxed and also smitten with the lottery plague, the Government is ever in financial distress. Why? Not only because of failures of the markets, but because the Treasury leaks in many directions, and the Republic will not live on its income, and cannot find enough integrity to cover its activities. It is capable of buying for three-quarters of a

million dollars the Santa Clara convent, which cost a quarter of a million a few months before Governmental purchase. State thrift is unknown. Public offices are means of personal enrichment. The Government will constantly seek aid from America, mortgaging its liberty to get it, year by year ever necessitating the presence of American authority at Habana and upon occasion the persuasive gleam of the bayonet.

Cuba is a Protectorate.

BOOK III  
NEW MEXICO





## I. AT SANTA FE

JUDGING the tropics in midsummer to be too tiring, we decided to postpone our journey to Panama and Mexico until autumn and winter. Balboa climbed that peak in Darien in September. That should be my month for going there. So we went, for the rest of the summer, to "La Ciudad Real de Santa Fe," away in the Southern Rockies upon the borderland of Mexico. That was no small journey from Habana: two days in a fruit boat to New Orleans, then in a Gulf train to Houston and San Antonio, half across the Texan desert to a point nearer the Pacific than the Atlantic—burning El Paso, where the street asphalt hisses when the water-cart comes round. Then up country to Albuquerque, of which name, at least, there used to be Spanish dukes, the Dukes of Albuquerque. Then sixty miles through scrub and sand to Santa Fe, which is some seven thousand feet up—about as high as Mexico City, though nothing like so verdant a place.

Here we hired a mud house—to be polite, "adobe-built"—from the Mexicans: three cool, spacious rooms, a porch, a "corral." We bought two horses, Billy and Buckskin, to whom I must say we became much attached, so that it was pity

when the time came, after some months, to part with them. I bought my Billy from a cowboy for thirty dollars. "Shorty," who sold him to me, did not seem to think the transaction complete till sealed with a drink. He had in a saddle-pocket of the horse he was riding a stout bottle of whisky, and giving me a ferocious wink he turned his horse into a lane and poured into a little tin can a ration of what Uncle Sam forbids.

"I think he'll be a useful pony when he has had corn for a month," said I.

"He's all right," said Shorty, wiping his lips. "You can't kill 'im."

That turned out to be true, as far as I could judge. Billy proved to be somewhat of an immortal. The adventures we had with these horses would make a book in themselves.

One thing was rather disappointing: New Mexico is not such a horse country as it was. Cross the border into Mexico proper, and every man except the Tarahumare Indians and the lowest of the peons is mounted. But on the American side Ford is surely conquering. It is more respectable to have a car than a horse. The cowboys and the Mexicans ride to their work, but pleasure is identified, not with the horse, but with a car. The cow-girl is almost extinct, and the only women riders you see are visitors. In the Plaza at Santa Fe there is no longer any place to tie up a horse. Motors hold all the space. You have to seek out waste places in or about town, or else take the risk of tying to a telegraph pole in the midst of the

traffic. Billy nearly pulled down several telegraph poles, and actually on one occasion broke his stout leather reins.

Outside the city horsemen are common enough, cowboys and Mexican farmers, and occasional mounted parties of polite Americans with hired horses and guides.

Santa Fe is or was the home of an artistic and literary colony. It is a health resort for people with lung disease, and it possesses an excellently well-equipped sanatorium. A large number of residents are under doctor's orders. The driest air in America and a never-failing morning sun make Santa Fe ideal for consumptives. There have been many complete cures effected. The development of the place as a literary colony started no doubt with the coming there for her health of Alice Corbin from Chicago, one of the protagonists of the New Poetry movement, a sponsor of Lindsay and Sandburg and many others who rose to fame under the auspices of the *Poetry Magazine*. When she was "ordered South," poetry moved with her. It was no doubt owing to Vachel Lindsay's generous enthusiasm that we were tempted to go to Santa Fe. He saw in the little city in the mountains unbounded possibilities.

So in coming to Santa Fe we not only met the mountains but a number of writers and artists, amongst them my old acquaintance Witter Bynner, who once diverted five chapters of *Undiscovered Russia* into verse which some one else, later, put to music. Bynner had quit the world in which

he was somewhat of a king for a hermit's hut in the desert. Here we met Elizabeth Sergeant, who wrote up life in the neighbourhood in her amusing *Letters from a Mud House*; here as a visitor came William Allen White. Over the mountains at Taos lived D. H. Lawrence. A visitor also was Mrs. C. N. Williamson, gay and young despite her weeds and the score of novels and stories she and her late husband had written. The artists were as numerous, if more difficult to place, being mostly very jealous of one another. My favourite question to them was: "Who is the greatest artist in Santa Fe?" But I never could get an answer beyond a faint blush and a slight personal embarrassment.

At seven thousand feet, however, literary and artistic people are apt to be very nervous, and those of poor health painfully so. There was more pleasure to be had riding in the hills than at the afternoon "teas," which were always being arranged. At these some beautifully gowned millionaire's wife "poured," the young men simpered in their well-ironed ready-made clothes, the flappers, all curled and tinted, were like wax-works, and middle-aged artists with long hair sat in corners musing on life like old frumps at a ball—very hard on them. To one of these gatherings a literary man and his wife came riding in one day. They walked in in sporting attire, and the wife looked very striking in a gay white jumper and riding breeches.

I got into trouble at Santa Fe, being supposed to have said it was "a shabby little town." Ladies

whispered the blasphemy to one another at tea. I am to be remembered by that phrase. But in truth I think it a wonderful place and a wonderful district; something quite novel and fresh in American life. The cowboys, the Indians, and the Mexicans make it very interesting. Its sun and air, its mountains, its horses, give it a marvellous possibility. The shabbiness lies in certain little things such as the mean commercialism of the shops and the absence of a popular market for dairy products, fruit, and vegetables. This is an Americanisation of life. Every city of any size in Mexico has its popular market which furnishes fresh food at a cheap price. But "La Ciudad Real de Santa Fe" lives on canned milk, canned tomatoes, dried fruit, storage meat, coffee ground years ago in Chicago, eggs of uncertain origin and age. Fruit harvests fall to the ground and rot because they are plenty and the stores do not want the price reduced. There is something artificial and unpleasant in living in New Mexico on rations from Chicago. It militates against simple living, and it should be of the essence of a literary colony in the mountains to live simply. And it raises a problem for Americans—how is one to escape from the American standardisation of life?

Albuquerque, sixty miles away and many times larger, is even more artificial and standardised. Possibly El Paso, on the frontier, more so still. El Paso is like Kansas City in small, and that is the more remarkable as El Paso is as much in the desert as Luxor in Egypt or Merv

in Turkestan; perhaps more so than Merv, for the Rio Grande is not to be compared to the Oxus River.

It prompts the thought that if America ever extended her territory to Chihuahua, the next large city in Mexico going southward, then Chihuahua also would become in a short time a replica of a hundred cities in the North. There might then be said of Chihuahua what Carl Sandburg said of Kalamazoo:

Kalamazoo, you ain't in a class by yourself;  
I seen you before in a lot of places.  
If you are nuts, America is nuts.

However, at Santa Fe my wife and I contrived to live a free and happy life in our house of mud, and enjoyed the wild West, the "last West," as it has been happily called, to the full. It is all pine scrub and sand for another thousand feet up, loose sand and boulders which have, however, no terrors for the horses. Billy and Buck are sure-footed as goats, and can be ridden up steep banks which English horses would merely regard as walls. But neither horse will jump anything. After a thousand feet you enter a region of tall pines and firs, and five hundred feet later you reach aspens, grass, wild flowers, wild fruits. Most of the little rain that falls seems to benefit the upper mountain region. Santa Fe itself is in constant danger of drought. Water is very freely supplied by the Water Company, and the dwellers in the many villas let the hose play on their lawns all day and all night, till suddenly there is

a warning note, the hose ceases, and the lawns wilt. There is perhaps too much waste of the water of the little Santa Fe river on which Santa Fe's reputation as an oasis depends. In a state of nature very few wild flowers bloom down below. But in June and early July, like wild roses, the cactus blossoms everywhere, and its red flowers delight the eye. The eyes crave and thirst for flowers and greenery.

Features of the country are the *arroyos* or dried-out river channels, dead, stony, and sandy, which wander along in an irregular course as if they had once held fair streams. Many of these have never known living water. The river they represent is flowing underneath the sand, and the channel is not truly a river-bed but a subsidence. In these oases no grass will grow, there is not the slightest pasture; the only green thing that flourishes is a deep-rooted yellow flowering weed of the desert, a sort of sage brush, called locally *chimesa*. Riding downward to the Rio Grande valley, the view opens grandly upon wide, sweeping desert country bounded by strange wind-carved pyramids of rock and little mountains wrought into fantastic shape. Vachel Lindsay, who like many others deplores the name of the State—New Mexico—wanted to call it "New Arabia" or "New Egypt," because of its natural pyramids, its prehistoric ruins, its hieroglyphics, and the sacred dances of the Indians. But he felt also that it was first of all "Cowboy country"—it was, or had become, America, and it is difficult to confound the new with the old.



We met, in Santa Fe, Jack Thorp, sometimes called the Cowboy Poet, because of his collection of cowboys' songs, and for several songs he wrote himself—but a substantial man, bred with and always living with horses, and full of lore of the Border. It is no doubt due in part to him that we went to the Cowboys' Reunion at Las Vegas, which I here describe.

## II. COWBOYS

WHEN Thorp took horses up to pasture we sometimes went also. That meant a ten-mile ride up into the greener heights of the mountains, the leaving of the horses up there in a roughly wired enclosure, a picnic lunch, and then a ten-mile ride back in the evening. On these occasions Jack would be in old weather-beaten *chaparreras* (leg aprons of leather), and there would be a ready coil of rope on the horn of his saddle. Five or six loose horses would be driven ahead of us, and as like as not a mare and foal. It was very pleasant, especially in the early morning. Mrs. Thorp accompanied us, a clever, smiling Irishwoman, nicknamed generally "Blarney." She added greatly to the general good humour, and would say with an expression of much mirth, as we sallied all together into some rough and boulder-strewn defile—"Here we go, the last of Teddy's bunch!"

Apparently Jack in his earlier days had known Roosevelt, played polo with him, or, it may be, sold him polo ponies. The great Theodore, New Yorker as he was, made a great impression on the minds of the cowboys. And again, I suppose his make-up of cowboy and rough-rider fired

the imagination of the East. You still have to be something of a cowboy to be a real leader in America. Curious that the Republican President, the spokesman of banking and high finance, should masquerade as one of the Wild West.

A great nation entirely composed of clerks is unthinkable. It must have peasants, or highlanders, or cowboys, behind it; something of the wild and primitive, something of romance. Therefore it is that America clings to her conception of a glorious wild West behind her drab clerical East. The multitudes of New York men and women gloating over Emerson Hough's *Covered Waggon* at the cinema is for ever characteristic of the East. It must have its real or imaginary covered waggons in the background as a part of its romance.

Nevertheless the number of cowboys and cattle-ranchers has greatly decreased, driven back by farmers' wire. And the type is tamer than it was. There are still great herds. You may see the chuck-waggon going round, and meet many a wild-looking boy riding in full rig-out, but it is not denied that the old-time colour has faded.

Perhaps the last ground of the real cowboy is the Mexican border; hence Las Vegas Reunion, which eclipses the show at 101 Ranch, Oklahoma, and is only to be compared with the round-up at Pendleton, Oregon, or Cheyenne in Wyoming. The spirit of the West still triumphs over the spirit of the East at Las Vegas, where in one

week the "flivver" is routed by the horse, and no man who is worth his salt is seen wearing a crease in his trousers.

War-whoops and coloured silks and silver-studded saddles and goat-wool *chaparreras* and daring faces and happy horses make up Las Vegas during the days of the cowboys' gathering. Here comes Leonard Stroud on Diamond, and little Buster, aged ten, on Shetland Joe. Here comes the victor of the bronk riders, Buck Thompson, who will put the fear of God into Peggy Hopkins and Orphan Boy and Anarchist.

Here comes a cowboy with no legs, yet mounted on a mettlesome black steed and wearing a scarlet-and-gold shirt, full as a blouse. He is a veteran of cowboys. The parade of the cowboys forms up, led by a man in a dark chestnut shirt, with a belt full of cartridges and an ivory-mounted revolver sticking out above his hip; with him the chief judge of the riding and the races, carrying a purple-and-gold bannerette. Here come the brothers Neafus on racehorses. Here come a wonderful miscellany of riders, in turkey-red, in luminous purple, in unfaded pink and exuberant green; rough-necks with rough hats, hairy wrists, mighty shoulders and backs, rugged faces, and the sentimental, guileless eyes of good sportsmen and daring fellows.

There are cowgirls as well as cowboys—trim, modest, light—the wives and daughters of cowboys. Chief among them is Mayme Stroud, thin, almost hipless, with waist like a wedding ring, high brown sombrero on her head, and hair

hidden by voluminous red ribbon falling in big bows under the broad shadowy brim of her hat.

Idaho Bill brings up the tail of the procession in a ramshackle Ford car drawn by a horse. He is greatly encumbered by his camping outfit, and he has in the car with him a black bear which he caught in Mexico after it had killed his horse and badly bitten him. At least so he says, and he will raise his trouser to show you the scars. He has buffalo horns tied to the radiator of the car; he wears his hair long, has a green coat and boots of alligator hide. Every year he goes into Mexico buying outlaw horses. Whenever he hears of a horse no Mexican can ride, he buys it to bring North for the cowboys. And he drove up this year a hundred or so of bucking horses. He is a sort of successor to Cody—a picturesque figure and a fitting living symbol of the flamboyant spirit of the West.

Some thousands of dollars have been subscribed as prizes for the cowboys in their noble sports of bronk-riding, bull-dogging, steer-roping, relay racing, and the rest, and there are scores of bets by cowboys on themselves. Curious, is it not, that there are few Mexican contestants and no Indians? The American cowboys can outride and outdare all Mexicans, all Indians, and are not afraid of any man or beast that breathes. As the legend of High Chin Bob narrates, if they met a lion on the hills, they'd rope him; they'd hold him fast and not let go of him till they'd dragged the spirit out of him.

“ Ride’ m, cowboy!” “ Hold’ m, cowboy!” cries one to another as the wild horses scream with rage and rear and kick and buck and bolt with the laughing boys on their backs.

Riding wild horses is the favourite sport of the cowboys, and the untamed horse is a fearsome and beautiful beast. And he is not ill-treated. There is a great deal about the enclosure which reminds one of the bull-ring, but not its cruelty. The men take a chance of death; the animals do not. In the bronk-riding competition the horse is beguiled into a heavily-timbered narrow pen where a slipsaddle and halter are put on him without his knowing it. The rider gets down gently on to his back from the wooden wall. Then when the president gives the word, “ Turn him out!” a door swings free and out plunges the horse. The cowboy beats him to the one side and to the other with his felt hat and spurs him forward, and the horse behaves like a mad dromedary, makes double humps of his back, leaps right in air, turns about and about. When the cowboy has been on for one minute the man in the brown shirt fires his revolver in the air and five or six cowboys race to the rider to rescue him from the bolting, careering horse. This is often the most exciting part of the event. It may develop into a terrific race. Sometimes, before the rider can be lifted from the wild horse to another cowboy’s horse, or safely dismounted, the bronco has crashed right through the wooden enclosure. That was what happened to Buck Thompson, on Orphan Boy, and the wild horse

got rid of him on the fence as it pounded right through it.

The little town of Las Vegas, meaning The Meadows, was crowded with visitors, some of them of an outlandish type that seldom strays from home. One dame in a restaurant, dressed in the style of the early nineties, asked us what part we came from. When I said "England," she turned to her husband with—

"Lord's sake, what do you know about that?" Then she turned to me and asked :

"Did you come all the way by car?"

The secretary of the Reunion undertook to house most people who came, and he sat at a desk with a telephone and kept the town awake asking all and sundry for hospitality for visitors. This secretary, I discovered afterwards, was a poet.

My wife and I were happily accommodated in a house where beside ourselves were three very eager cowboys, and in the corral at the back were their horses. We naturally were deeply interested in their fortunes. The first day was not so good for them, but on the second morning with the roping and bull-dogging they shone. I think all three won prizes.

I was very eager to see the bull-dogging, which is a unique Western sport. Jack Thorp and his wife and the artist Penhallow Henderson, who were with us at the round-up, were glowing in their pride in it, and told some amusing stories in connection with it. The cowboys, when they joined the Army, commonly said they were off to

“bull-dog the Kaiser.” Bull-dogging started in Texas, and a negro named Pickett is sometimes reputed as the originator of the sport. Pickett one day entered the bull-ring at Juarez on the other side of the Mexican line and interrupted a bull-fight by bull-dogging the bull.

Juarez is on the other side of the Rio Grande from El Paso. Americans go back and forth all the while, and on Sundays many are not averse from seeing a bull-fight there. It is a rough-and-tumble city; the bull-ring is just a stone amphitheatre.

One Sunday some years ago Pickett bull-dogged the bull. He was at the entrance to the ring with his horse, and he had had enough to drink. A number of white cowboys, Texans, were about him, encouraging him, and they wagered him to ride into the ring in the midst of the fight. Then the humorous and loquacious Pickett, who was a famous character, spurred his horse across the arena, got the bull a-running, and then, overtaking him at a gallop, leapt from his saddle on to the bull's horns. The impetus of the gallop he imparted to his wrists as he twisted the horns, and he laid the fierce animal with a thud flat on his flanks on the arena sand—to the uproarious cheers of the Americans present and the angry, prolonged hisses of the Mexicans.

Well, that is bull-dogging, the Wild West's substitute sport for the Spanish *corrida*. I watched it and steer-riding for hours in the cattle-ring of the cowboys, and I suppose it would be difficult to find a sport with a greater thrill in it—to see



a cowboy on a fine horse going full tilt after a frightened steer that has got the start of him—and how these clumsy animals can go it when once they think they are being chased!—neck to neck, horse and bullock, dark mane and long horn, dirt splashing upward as they go, cowboys looking on and laughing, and shouting, “Let go that horse—on’ m, cowboy!” and then the leap in air and the rider clutching the brown bovine head, or actually sitting with one thigh across a madly plunging horn, and the bullock going on with him, trailing him, wiping the ground with him for fifty yards or more, if the cowboy has not been able to impart the momentum of the galloping horse to the twist which he gives to the horns to bring the animal down.

Each rider is timed, and the one who performs the feat in the shortest time wins the prize. I saw it done in fifteen seconds—a turning over of the bull with the rapidity of a pistol shot; leap from the horse and twist of horns and thud and all consecutive. I saw it also done in two minutes and thirty seconds, where the bull-dogger, holding on to the horns, yet lying full length ahead of the bull, was rushed part way round the arena like a toboggan.

And besides this risky, thrilling fun there was steer-riding, which is also what might be called a part substitute for a bull-fight. Riding at full pace on a rushing steer is a violent sport—clown’s fun after the bull-dogging. The bullocks are greatly enraged at being ridden, and they flounder and blunder and toss imaginary bundles in air

and glare out of their eyes like searchlights, while the wild boy above, with chaps on his legs, waves his sombrero in air and gives forth Indian war-whoops all the while.

The great Western crowd laughs, so do the cowboys, so do the judges, and even the many horses ranged on all sides seem to look on with mirth. It hardly feels like this century—one thinks of mediaeval jollity; but comparisons are misleading. Such fun is of all time. The Athenians would have loved it. And bull-dogging would have been a greater diversion in the Roman Coliseum than the Christians and the lions.

After the bull-dogging there was roping of wild horses, saddling them and riding them. The horses were let loose in the arena, and each cowboy had to catch his. As these had never been broken, the excitement can be imagined: excitement of the horses, of the would-be riders, and of the crowd looking on. It was full twenty minutes before even one cowboy had saddled and bridled a horse—and he could not make the animal go round the course.

Then we had a chuck-waggon race: waggons blundering round the course to given points, where they had to stop, horses had to be taken out of shafts and put in imaginary corrals, rear flap of waggon to be let down, a fire lit on the ground and a pot of coffee boiled.

Then a Roman race and a relay race. And Idaho Bill in his alligator-hide boots chewed his cigar all the while as if to him all the horses

belonged, and the president of the reunion galloped from point to point of the arena judging the competitors in each race. And all the while a brass band kept up a lively hubbub vaguely akin to music,—“I’m nobody’s darling,” and kindred airs.

In the evenings after all these doings there were cowboy dances and a rolling up and down Las Vegas’s streets of a vaunting, leather-lined crowd. Some still rode about on their horses, but most had taken their steeds to their “corrals” and thrown them out their armfuls of green alfalfa for the night. The legless cowboy in his crimson shirt still rode his ebony horse, and had evidently found liquor, for he rode into the main entrance of Las Vegas’s only fine hotel, clattered round the stone hall and stood with his horse in the doorway of the main dining-room, asking in a stentorian voice for a roast-beef sandwich. The pallor in the faces of some Easterners who had “stopped off” on the way to California was most apparent. “Why don’t they phone the police?” said one old man, mopping his brow with his handkerchief.

But the cowboy kept quite calm, and, unloosing his rope, made a pass to rope the old man and roped a young girl with chestnut hair instead. She laughed, but was not a little alarmed, so the cowboy unloosed her and lassoed the cashier at the desk instead, and then the hotel manager. Then they brought him his beef sandwich, and with a splutter of hoofs he rode out of the hotel into the gay streets again.

### III. INDIANS

THE story of the Indians in America is the story of the weak in the presence of the strong. Despite the ideals which reign in capitals and cultural centres, it is always the same with the main body of the human race—the strong may pity the weak, but he will not forbear to use the advantage of his strength. There is little to choose between Spaniards and English. There is little to choose between any of the races—Belgians in the Congo, Portuguese in Brazil, Russians in Turkestan; they have dispossessed, enslaved, expelled, destroyed, without a mist upon their conscience. And it is difficult to think that mankind has improved. If a new world were discovered to-day, if ocean delivered up a new continent, one of the first thoughts would be—*Is there gold there?* If we found people on it, specimens would be brought to be shown to prime ministers and exhibited in places of amusement. And there would be a rush to that new world of gold-seekers, pirates, adventurers, and Imperial administrators.

So it may be pardoned if at this stage in American history one refuses to wax indignant over how Spaniards and Anglo-Saxon forefathers

of present Americans behaved toward the natural possessors of the soil.

The justification for the rapine of America—or at least of North America—is that it has been made into a “going concern.” We believe in our curious self-complacence that an American humanity with factories, gilded by millionaires and mighty banks, towering heavenward in mighty cities, is a greater glory to God than the life of Hiawatha and his friends. We must confess that it seems so, and it is difficult to hear the ancient whisper—*Where is thy brother Abel?*

The Indians, however, are not forgotten. They are more remembered now that they are few. There comes a moment, when the old race is mostly underground, or tucked safely away in wildernesses remote from human ken, that the new race of conquerors becomes sentimental. It has destroyed all that it adored, and now it adores all that it destroyed. It is so now in the United States, where the Indians have become the pets of tourists and the theme of poets.

You have to travel far to meet the Indians, so the railway companies have used the Indian as an advertisement, not only pictured but living. For at Las Vegas station or at Albuquerque, and many others, do you not see station Indians all bedizened, walking up and down before the delighted traveller’s eyes? The Indian has become part of the romance of far travel.

The United States have left their own primitive past behind, and emerged from the mud and the smells and the roughness of pioneer days. All

America treads paved sidewalks. All America goes in cars. All America is in clean linen and good clothes. There is electric light, sanitation. Baths have become more national than in Russia or Turkey. America indeed leads civilisation and leads it forward. So the distance between the Indians and the citizens of the United States grows more and more remarkable. The gap is a sort of Grand Canyon in itself, a grand canyon in the continuity of human things.

The sentimental interest is therefore greatly intensified by the spectacular one, the paradoxical one, of a people standing still whilst all the rest of the world moves on, a people who refuse to budge from what they were in 1492.

I suppose those Indians were most lucky whose habitat was more remote; those who were furthest from the capital of New Spain; those who were furthest from the centres of population in the United States. Probably the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico were in that position. That is why they have survived so well. The deserts have been their protection.

An acquaintance, buying land near Ramah, New Mexico, found when he took over a new estate that there was behind his ranch-house a whole village of cliff-dwellings. In a like manner, when in 1848 America took over the new territory which was the spoil of the Mexican War she found she took with it the Pueblo Indians, living more or less untouched, unmolested, as they had lived for centuries. Remote from Aztec power, remote from Cortes' power, remote from the Spanish,

remote from the seat of power of the Mexican Empire, now remote also from modern America and all that America means—the Pueblo Indians are still living in their traditional homes, worshipping rain-gods in the desert, dancing ceremonial dances, dancing their sorrows and their ecstasies.

I was at the Indian pueblo of San Juan on St. John's Day. The Indians and the Mexicans were holding a *fiesta*. Broadly beat the sun on the mountainous deserts, on the wind-carved pyramidal mountains and strange rocks, on the sandy waste of the river bed, and on the mud huts of the Indians.

Such a hubbub! The drums of the Indians are beating, throbbing; the many feathers of the war-bonnets are bobbing over the sombreros of the dark-suited Mexican crowd which looks on. There is dancing. Let us climb on to the roofs of the mud huts and look down on it.

The drums that they are beating are shaped like sections of tree-trunks, but adorned with rude swastikas. Indian warriors, all painted and be-dizened and armed, are dancing to the tune of the drum-beats, and beautiful women with long hair hanging down their backs, set broad faces, slightly lifting feet in white curl-toe boots, are balancing little feather-topped arrows in each hand.

The war-chiefs dance in a sort of war prance: an arrow-shooting gesture, a spear-holding gesture! And as they dance they jingle, their belt-bells and earrings and rattles all a-tinkling. Their long hair is done up in twin pellicules of fur, and

hangs in long tails over their shoulders—or it is interplaited with bright ribbons. Their faces are painted in various ways. The leading man, carrying a pink-melon-coloured scythe-shaped banner, has black ladders on his cheeks climbing to his yellow-circled eyes. Another man has a striped face, stove black alternating with brightest orange; another has yellow star-rays round his eyes and the ruddiest blood-red over the rest of his face. One is painted top half yellow, lower half rose-red. Almost all wear war-bonnets, brown or fawn felt hats, or buckskin caps trimmed with selected black and white feathers. All the feathers are white-tipped except those which have been dipped in the war paint. On one warrior this headdress is adorned with small circular mirrors the size of watch-lids; they circle his face and gleam in the sun, but they also continue downward at the bases of the long stream of feathers to his ankles. For these feathery bonnets, starting as a broad crest to the brows, finish only short of the ground—and how they dance in the wind as their owners dance!

All the men carry weapons and shields—spears with bright ribbons, imitation bayonets, revolvers, pistols, swords, bows and arrows. One, having on his shield a blood-red star and crescent, slews in the air with a great curved sword. Several are naked to the middle, but all are powdered or dabbed with white paint. They have large feminine-looking breasts, deep-cut navels, smooth skins, and no hair. They perspire profusely, and fan themselves occasionally with feathers. One



almost naked pagan has the Stars and Stripes for a loin-cloth, and prances about with a sham rifle. Occasionally the semi-naked ones seem to obtain furs from somewhere, and appear with their backs and bellies quite covered up.

The drummers are older-looking men, very stern in their expression. They know nothing of tradition except its binding force. One of them has a crown of fresh-cut stems of the cotton-wood tree. They beat their throbbing drums. They sing, they chant, they mumble—*mumble, mumble, dum, dum, dum*: it is hardly a tune but a sensual appeal. The men do the dance, plunging back and forth; the women throb and quiver, with their broad-booted feet, and short, broad, brightly-enwrapped bodies, and wide, wood-like faces, and low, broad brows framed in sharp-cut ebony hair. Their front hair is cut Egyptian-wise, sphinx-wise, while down to where the waist should be behind hangs a great cloud of untrimmed, waving tresses. They quiver; the men prance. All the dancers are in fours—the men and the women in alternate files, thirty men and thirty women.

The men are the fighters; the women serve them with arrows. The men prance in front of the women; the women are protected by them. The women scarcely change their positions the whole time, but the men diagonalise between files and prance forward in front of them, lifting high their weapons and emitting curious little cries and yelps. As they kill in the ritual they give the death-cry of the victims.

They dance six long dances, and after each, in a processional bacchanalia, leave the scene of the dance and, with splendour of waving colour, file upward on ladders on to the roofs of the houses and disappear through holes in the roof into the two *kivas*, or council-chambers of the men and of the women.

It is also a Mexican holiday, and near by goes a dilapidated "merry-go-round," worked by hand by two men, with the wretchedest burble of music, a torn canvas roof, and a flag. Somewhere, also, in the background, a cowboy is riding a bucking bronco while dark-eyed Mexican youth looks on.

But the mud huts of the Indians and the freshly made green-branched street shrines of St. John and the Madonna are the real background of the *fiesta*. The last dance of the afternoon is danced bowingly and worshippingly into a green alcove, where stands a little silver-and-white Virgin, and an old Mexican is sitting beside her playing dreamily on a violin. In one respect at least the Indians are not as they were. They have become Catholics. I am told that is merely a polite acquiescence on their part, and, though with their faces they bow to the Madonna, their hearts know her not.

In the course of the summer we rode to seven or eight Indian villages; sometimes to dances, sometimes just to see the villages themselves and the normal way of life in them. And we were much besought to buy turquoise rings and bracelets and brightly-woven saddle-blankets and rugs.

Some visitors to Santa Fe bought great quantities of these things, and one of the poets disported five or six large silver-and-turquoise rings on his fingers and had more still in a drawer. Nearly all the ladies of Santa Fe had waist-belts adorned with silver conches. The Indians work the same turquoise mines which have been theirs immemorially, and they mine also silver, though I think not a little of the silver-ware is derived from molten dollars now. Paper money seems always unacceptable to the Indians. So one always carries a weight of silver in one's pockets when travelling in these parts.

Each pueblo is a community and lives a communal life. Their land is held in common, and is inalienable. I believe their title derives from the King of Spain, legalised by the Mexican Republic and recognised by the United States when they conquered the country. Much of the best land, however, has been taken from them. There are many squatters, both English- and Spanish-speaking. In many places their water has been diverted, and they have been left stranded on yellow sands. They have never been able to defend themselves in civilised courts, being incapable of grasping the procedure—and they have suffered accordingly. All last summer and autumn there raged a campaign, fostered by the artists and literary colony in Santa Fe, for the protection of the Indians and the institution of new works of irrigation to give them back their lost water. Thanks to this campaign a spoliation measure, which passed the United States Senate,

commonly called the "Bursum Bill," was recalled. The object of this Bill had been chiefly to give a legal title to the squatters. There is a good deal of hope that, having frustrated the passing of this Bill, the Indian Committee of Santa Fe will have been able to introduce into Congress a highly practical measure, which, at the same time, would help and protect the Indians, benefit the squatters, and pay for itself. This is a Bill for new irrigation works and compensatory land grants to the Indians.

The great problem of living is that of water, and more than half the Indian dances are prayers to a Nature God for rain. The description which I give here of our ride to Santo Domingo pueblo to their greatest festival may give some suggestion of the desert and the Indians praying for rain.

We ride down from the mountains with their green pastures to the parched valleys and plateaus, and are told irrigation has ceased for want of water. The river beds and channels and dykes are yellow and dry and scorching. Rivers, instead of broadening out, grow less as they flow—attenuate. They become trickles, they become mere wetness of the tongue in the mouth, they disappear.

Even the cactus has withered. The rose-like cactus blossoms of the higher mountains are no more. The fresh green spiny stalks are brown and frightful in death. There is no grass for the horses, and the only green things on the waste

are rank, poisonous, deep-rooted weeds which draw their sustenance from the moisture which is far below.

The bones of dead cattle tell a melancholy tale of thirst. Woe to the herd of the cowboys who do not know where water is to be found! They are driving their herds over vast distances—from California into Texas or beyond; they are taking their time, feeding well as they go. Or they ought to be feeding well. And the cowboy's mind-map of the world is one of hidden springs and constant pastures. So they have driven the herds upward, even though that be out of their way. For there is no water or pasture below.

Our horses would fain return. When we rest them at noon they trail their reins after them and start homeward and are not easily captured. We have found alkali water in the depths of an *arroyo*. The horses try to drink it, but lap up bitter sand instead. They quit trying to drink it and lie down in it instead and try to roll in it.

We climb black boulder-strewn cliffs and look painfully once more at the bleached bones of cattle. We walk our horses all the afternoon over a sun-blazing prairie toward a horizon that seems infinitely removed. And we see in the distance the bright-gleaming wheel of a water windmill, and the wheel is surely revolving. Though not our way, it means water, and we will go to it.

We are soon on a cow-trail, a goat-trail, a human-trail—all making for the windmill. How gaily the wheel flashes in the sunlight! It is truly a delight—a token of happiness. But, alas! when

we get to it we find the cisterns and the troughs all empty. The wheel is revolving, but it is drawing forth no water. All is desolate. We dismount and sit on the wall of the concrete reservoir, and the horses wonder why they are there.

But up above us revolves the wheel, once descried afar, now over our very heads and actual. And it cries as it revolves:

No waw . . . ter— Hell !  
Creak, cranger—  
He . . . ll,  
No waw . . . ter—

And all strewn around on the ground are discarded bottles and cans, and a cross of new wood marks somebody's grave.

"No waw . . . ter!" Well, on to the horses again. We'll be on the great Rio to-morrow, far away, low down below this sun-cursed moor. The horses will drink deep when we get there. And we shall join with the Indians, who, on the day of St. Dominic, are going to intercede and dance for rain.

On the evening of the second day we rode into the mud-hut settlement of the Indians of Santo Domingo and admired their large new church with its external fresco of horses. The horse came to the Indians at the same time as the Cross, and perhaps to them is as holy.

We rode along the broad street, three times as broad as New York's Broadway, and hoof-marked and wheel-marked from wall to wall. The squaws

were ascending and descending ladders to go in or come out at the doors which they have in their roofs. On strings along their roof-tops chunks of meat were desiccating in the sunlight. But in front of many houses were portals of green branches and boughs brought up from the woods along the bank of the river.

The Indians neither saluted us nor welcomed us. But their dogs barked at us and we passed on—away through their cornfields down to the Rio Grande, the great river. And there we camped, where the rapid flood rolls down from the Rockies, red with the colour of Colorado.

It was the eve of the festival of St. Dominic. Indians in their covered waggons were coming from all parts—Jemez Indians, Tesuque Indians, Navajos. Indians also on horseback, galloping along the opposite bank of the river and plunging their horses to the ford. All night long the moon among her clouds looked kindly down upon the river and listened, as it were, to the galloping of the horsemen and the crunching of the wheels of the waggons on the valley sand.

Indians encamped in the valley and let loose their horses, built fires beside ours, and fried their corn and boiled their coffee; gay men and tittering squaws and wild-eyed little ones. Up in the settlement the guests slept in the streets on the roadways, though all night long music never ceased, nor the throb of the drums for the morning. On the white mud church where the horses were painted on the outside walls they lit seven flaming altars which blazed into the night sky.

It looked then like an Aztec pyramid lit for human sacrifice to Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air. Perhaps to the Indians it was. Who knows their mind?

As for us, we slept in the bush on the verge of the red-flowing waters, and our horses neighed to one another and whinnied, the night long.

Next day, as on the night before, we swam in the river—its rapid current flattering our achievement. It was red and warm and mighty, rolling us in wave motion ten feet at a thrust. Yet it was weak. He would be a strong Indian who would swim the Rio Grande when it is in its strength. For it is then capable of washing away villages and towns as it goes. Have not the old church and half the pueblo of Santo Domingo been swept to limbo by the river?

Three beautiful youths come and sit by our camp fire and smile at us, and one is in a black velvet coat and with a crimson ribbon in his long ebony hair—he is handsome and romantic as Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Following him, we ride up to Mass in the church of the painted horses, and we find the pueblo arrayed in the many colours of gorgeous Indian life. And on top of the *kiva* or council-chamber is a banner crowned with a cluster of many-coloured painted feathers. An Indian takes our horses into his yard and we go into the church.

What was there more impressive than the service in Latin, completely in Latin, with not a word of Spanish or of English! Or the Indians singing the chorus of praise and serving at the



altar! A giant, as it seems, in terra-cotta-coloured coat and neatly tied voluminous black hair standing constantly at the altar steps. .

Saint Dominic is waiting—he lies prone on the ground. St. Dominic will be invoked at the Breaking of Bread: *Sanctus, sanctus!* “Oh, Santo Domingo, where art thou at this hour?—we’ll reach thee.” *Tinkle, tinkle*, goes the church bell, and then suddenly, *dum-a-dum-dum-dum, keraoh*, go the drums and horns of the Indians, and *spludge, spludge*, they fire their rifles in air.

The bearers raise St. Dominic on high. He seems veritably to rise from the dead as he gradually ascends above the worshippers’ heads. He is golden and patriarchal and benign, and they carry in front of him a little gilt dog. *Domini canes*, the dogs of the Lord, the Dominicans used to be called, and the pun has endured.

As St. Dominic is carried to every Indian house and byway of the grey mud-built pueblo, the horns and the drums accompany him, and *spludge, spludge*, goes the accompaniment of fired guns. And when all the visiting has been done the figure is placed in the alcove of green boughs, the street shrine before which two hundred Indians will dance a prayer for rain.

And now onward all the day the Indians dance. First come the Koshare, who represent the spirits of their ancestors. All but naked, they are painted a dull grey—to look either like corpses or invisible as ghosts. There are strange black bands and tracteries on their limbs and bodies,

and their faces are painted to affright; they grimace, they insinuate, they strike terror, and also they make mirth. They have corn-stalks in their hair, and sandals on their feet.

As for the rest, they all wear their long hair hanging, so that men look like women, but the men have branches of green tassels on their heads and the women wear green wooden crowns. The men have armlets of green with pine-twigs in them. The upper parts of their bodies are all exposed, but are painted dark brown and seem as of stone. The men wear fox-skins hanging behind them, like tails. The drums beat, the men incant, the Koshare wave their hands to heaven and make every gesture that means falling rain.

The living dance in ranks, but the wild Koshare, the spirits of the dead, dance in and out at will and seem to improvise all they do. They lead the dance, they dominate. It becomes an orgy of marvellous beauty, dimpling, dazzling; a great moving phantasmagoria. It is like the manes of a hundred black horses plunging together on the prairie; it is like running shadows and sunshine over mountain meadows of flowers. And all the while the drums, and all the while the incantations.

Strangest of all is the body of earnest old men at one side, not dancing, and yet somehow contributing to the dance. They are all farmers. They want the rain for their crops. They are terribly intent. They never cease turning from the heavens to the earth and back again, and

making with their fingers the gesture of trickling water and dropping rain, calling all the while something like:

*"Uhhy-uhhy-you-you, uhhy-uhhy-yah-yah, uhhy-uhhy-yum-yum, uhhy-uhhy-you-you!"*

How they want it to rain ! There's no doubt of the sincerity of their prayers.

The dance is in two sections; one represents Winter, the other Summer. They dance separately and then come in together in one grand bacchanalia, the Koshare exceeding themselves in yelling at visitors and sightseers, booing into their faces and kicking their shins.

Little children come bringing loaves to place at the feet of St. Dominic, who stands benignly in the silver-and-green shadow-land of his bower in the village street. He seems to be listening to something. He is altogether remote from this time. He is thinking of something else, trying to remember something. But be that so or no, little loaves have been placed in front of him, and outside the shrine in an astonishing frenzy the dance goes on.

The beautiful Indian girls, so young, so dark and jewel-like, lift their naked feet in perfect time, in a hypnotic time, and balance their bodies, balance to the rhythm of the great dance with half-closed eyes.

The Rio Grande, away below, rolls on in red waves from Colorado to the sea. The clouds that are above are merely messengers, fleet-footed Mercuries whose message is not to be delivered here.

And yet, what is that which is forming away to the North? Surely a thunder-cloud. The mountains have stopped the clouds. It is raining. The clouds are broadening and enveloping.

"*Uhhy-uhhy-you-you*," the old men clamour, and point to the blackness and point back to their crops. "*Uhhy-uhhy-yah-yah*, don't stop for a moment, *uhhy-uhhy-yum-yum*."

The Koshare become the spirits of the storm, making the most astonishing leaps, and crying out and pulling the rain out of the heavens toward them. The ardour of the dance redoubles and there is no rest. And the heat, as of an oven, is not tempered by the breeze. Suddenly glimmering white ribbons are pulled through the clouds and it is lightning, a sign at least that the prayers are being heard.

These people know how to pray for rain. No idle "May it please Thee, O Lord," sitting on plush, but a terrific dynamic appeal by one force in Nature to another. What wonder if year after year the Santo Domingo dance brings rain!

But what a drama! It rakes one's soul. You are torn by it. Will it rain, will it rain? See the dance, see the clouds approaching, see the old men, see the waving fields of green flowering corn, see the maidens like jewels, see the young men like princes, see the dreadful and marvellous Koshare, all grey and stove-black with mask-like faces, grimacing and simpering and yet somehow compelling. See the emblems of Christ, see the church, see the *kiva*, white magic and black magic, altogether, all toned up, all compelling,

*throb-throb-throb, dum-dum-dum, uhhy-uhhy-yah-yah, uhhy-uhhy-you-you!*

Ah, it comes! yes, a spot, a wind-carried token of a storm somewhere else, a black tooth-mark in the pueblo dust. See the Koshare drop to it, lick it up with their tongues, dust and all, and cry, "More, more"—all hands to the sky, all hands to the earth, *uhhy-uhhy-you-you, uhhy-uhhy-yah-yah!*

But it does not rain. It rains all around; it will rain. Cool airs creep in. The dance ends at last, and all who danced in it are exhausted. Candles on long poles are lit. St. Dominic is raised again, and he and the little gold dog are borne away to the church.

A bell rings quietly in the evening air and the streets begin to empty—of all but Mexicans and Americans. In the distance you hear the river rolling by, hear also the hoofs of the horses and the splashing of those who are fording the Rio Grande homing into the night.

#### IV. MEXICANS OF NEW MEXICO

NEW MEXICO is the only Catholic state in the Union. Maryland has the tradition of Catholicism, but New Mexico has the verisimilitude of a Latin country in Europe. When, in 1848, it was annexed to the United States, or, let us say, in 1850, when it was organised as a territorial possession, or in 1863, when it was reshaped,—it has had many birthdays—it was entirely Spanish-speaking and Catholic. The population is five times as great as it was then. The Mexicans have prospered and multiplied; the Texans have colonised the south and east. State consciousness is remarkably undeveloped. Those of Texan origins are proud of Texas. No Anglo-Saxon or German-American seems ready to call himself a New Mexican. It is the Spanish-speaking people who are the real New Mexicans—and they do not care to be confounded with real Mexicans. The visitor, therefore, has a sense of being in a foreign State and one decidedly Catholic.

The atmosphere is rather that of Spain than of Mexico. For Mexico has been exposed to sixty-five years of anti-clericalism wherein the Church has been fought by the State, shorn of

its possessions, and greatly reduced in pride and power. It has meant much to the New Mexican that his Church has not been humiliated. In Mexico also the strain of race is much more mixed. Almost every Mexican has Indian blood, and the onslaught on the power of the Church was obtained by her great Indian President, Benito Juarez. The converted Indian is a much less faithful son of the Church than the Castilian, and it may be that the spirit of revolt in Mexico derives more from the aboriginal strain than from the Spaniard. In what is now New Mexico, however, there has never been much crossing with Indian blood. The Navajos, the Apaches, the Zunyis, and the rest, were never subjugated in the way the Aztec tribes were. Deserts lay between these races and the main bodies of armies; their wealth was not enough to tempt great numbers of adventurers. The Spaniards who settled were mostly peaceful colonists. They set up churches, they built new villages, they tilled the soil or herded cattle, and they were content to forget higher ambitions. They lived to themselves.

There is now a remarkable difference between the Mexican proper and the Mexican who has become a United States citizen. And that although New Mexico only became a State and was admitted to the Union in 1912. It is not simply the moderation of the size of his sombrero and his abandonment of tight breeches, nor the disappearing of the mantilla as a head-dress of the women. It seems first of all to be a difference

in soul. The faces of the Mexicans are furtive, restless; their round, staring eyes tell of a primitive nature, simple, stupid, and violent. The New Mexican is of a much calmer countenance; he is steady, he does not fear his neighbours, he has civilised ambitions, and he does not drink. As Mexico and the United States might be called the Jungle and the Park, so the Mexican has the restlessness of wild nature, and the New Mexican the calm of an ordered and domestic life.

Prohibition has doubtless had a beneficent effect in New Mexico, but even before the "dry" regime the drinking of pulque had died out. Pulque, the juice of the maguey cactus, is a curse of Mexican life. In its effect it is more like a combination of alcohol and cocaine, and has a more destructive effect on nerve and brain than even "boot-leg whisky." Like tequila, mescal, and other cactus drinks, it is a provoker of violence, and is reputed to have destroyed whole civilisations before the Spaniards came. Legend tells of a virgin who brought some of it to the eighth King of the Toltecs, who took both it and her and had a "cactus-born" child, and all his people took to the new drink and were then fallen upon by the Chichimecs and destroyed. It was working havoc among the Aztecs in Cortes' time, and is responsible for much from then until now. But from that evil power the Mexican of New Mexico is surely protected.

Blood is thicker than water, and it is therefore surprising that there is so little sympathy between



the New Mexicans and their kindred over the Border. One must seek reasons not only in the better life under American rule but in the sparsity of the Mexican population on the other side of the line. There is no flood of people in Chihuahua or Coahuila or Sonora ready to overflow into what is now American territory. New Mexicans do not seem to have kith and kin on the other side. They do not read Mexican papers or take an interest in Mexican affairs. In the case of a new war with Mexico they would prove as loyal as the bold Texans themselves. The word "gringo" is not on their lips. They, for their part, show a marked dislike of being referred to as Mexicans, and if they must be "hyphenates" they would rather be called Spanish-Americans. They are proud of their citizenship, and are imitators of Anglo-Saxon America as far as their natural conservatism permits. They have fallen into the ways of American business, and they have seized upon American politics with great enthusiasm, canvassing Republicans or Democrats with the same fervour as the most ardent politicians of the North.

In their religious life, however, they are not inclined to change. The piety of the State might be a pattern for the Church. The New Mexicans preserve the religious solemnity of Burgos or Seville. All the villages and little towns have beautifully kept churches. And the homes, mud-built as they are, are all adorned with sacred pictures. Here one may see the remarkable "Santos"—pictures of Saints painted on wood,

not unlike some of the domestic ikons of the Old Believers in Russia, at least in their weird and strange conceptions of Godhead. Painted without art, smudged on to wood, these Santos nevertheless convey the deeply seated religiosity of a race.

In New Mexico there is not the extent of superstition that is to be found in Old Mexico. That is because Indian converts have been fewer. The Indians in Mexico have imported all manner of pagan ideas into current piety. That is natural, because they possessed elaborate Nature rituals, fetish worships, diabolisms; and the missionaries seldom denied practice or belief if they could change its name to Christianity and induce the pagans to be baptized. But the northern Spanish people kept their religion fairly pure. One remarkable phenomenon, however, in the State is the widespread prevalence of asceticism. Lent is observed with a rigour unknown elsewhere in America. There are thousands of people living in the mountains who practise self-flagellation and beat their bare backs with cactus or with whips till they are streaming with blood. They carry heavy crosses in procession. They even permit themselves to be tied in crucifical attitude and hung on a cross till they are exhausted. These are called the "Penitentes," apparently an offshoot of the Third Order of St. Francis, which was inaugurated in Mexico in the first year of Cortes' conquest. These are no longer safely in the bosom of Mother Church, neither are they excommunicated except by their own choice, but they are without priests, and practise their rituals

in windowless chapels called *moradas*. Of these there are many on the mountain-sides of the country near Santa Fe. The Penitentes cannot be considered popular; and they for their part do not ask the interest of outsiders. They are secretive, and some of the Texans are all for "cleaning them up." There is no "hundred per cent Americanism" in their practices, perhaps not one per cent, and I doubt that they can long endure. They are likely to be forced into the conventional orthodoxy of the Church within the century.

Santa Fe is in one way remarkable for its religious processions. Open-air rituals, ceremonies, processions, are forbidden in Mexico proper, and the monasteries and convents have mostly been dissolved. A monk is a rarity in Chihuahua, but a common figure in New Mexico. Sacred images repose in the churches in Old Mexico, but here nothing so usual as to bring them out into the streets in grand parade! When they carried out the little white De Vargas Madonna in memory of the succour given to the Spanish troops in the seventeenth century in the recovery of Santa Fe from the Indians—who had risen, killed their priests, razed their churches, and sacked the country—the procession may easily have been a mile long. Brass bands, sacred banners, mounted candlesticks, choir boys and clergy, knights of Columbus led by some one with a long bared sword, Indians wrapped in their blankets, squaws with black hair hanging in a cloud to their waists, children carrying garlands of flowers, Mexican

men in their clumsy clothes, women in long array of black—such a procession is a memorable and moving sight. It has a missionary power also, and draws converts who thirst for colour and emotion in the dullness of the Protestant sects.

I was urged by some Americans to think that Romanism without the Pope might become the new religion of America, and that it might start its great evangelism and revival from Santa Fe itself. Perhaps I am too much of a European, but the idea of Romanism without a Pope seemed that of a tree without a root. "I used to go to the church of the Paulist Fathers in New York every day of my life," said Vachel Lindsay, who comes of an ardent Free Church stock. "I am seventy per cent with them. Get rid of their politics and the Pope, and I would be with them heart and soul."

Possibly as America swung free of England and Mexico of Spain, and as the whole of America to-day with its Monroe Doctrine has cut adrift from European politics, so also its Catholicism might one day say—We will build Rome afresh in the New World and put away the old Rome of Europe as something which has been outlived. There might be a religious War of Independence. The Roman adherence of the United States, with its Irish, its Poles, its Czechs, its Southern Germans, Austrians, and Italians, and its Spanish-speaking peoples, is an enormous multitude. They obtain an increasing hold upon the control of America, and they are regarded at present by Protestants as an increasing danger. But that is

due, not so much to the religious expression of Romanism as to political implications.

Of course, there is a very telling reproach to Catholicism, and that is, that in Catholic countries one always finds what Protestants call "backwardness." It is a common objection in New Mexico, where it is difficult to get enough money to carry out an advanced educational programme, where natural ambition seems somehow thwarted by a satisfying religion, where the men do not think that their women can have opinions or use a vote, where ethical standards are low and the conscience seems to be encased in proof. Inter-marriage is regarded unfavourably by Americans. Many are ready to say that these Spaniards are not Americans, that they cannot be till they become Methodists or Presbyterians and speak the language properly. Even those who emotionally admire the processions and rituals go home to cool off and become disparagingly critical of the people, as of foreigners. For such, a trip over the Border into Old Mexico would be the best medicine—that they might see how far New Mexico had progressed from what it used to be when it was part of New Spain.

BOOK IV  
PANAMA



## I. FROM NEW MEXICO TO THE ISTHMUS

FROM the dry, bracing upper air of Santa Fe, where you may ride for long without raising a moist particle on your brow, down to hot and humid New Orleans, where without stirring a muscle you perspire at all pores and your body flows away from you to the wide Mississippi. It is a striking climatic transit—the latitude is much the same, a difference of five degrees north, but there are seven thousand feet and the desert behind you; water's edge, the Mississippi Delta, and the Gulf in front. From the pine sentinels of the mountains to the rank heat of the sugar plantations and the rice!

New Orleans in summer is hotter than Panama itself. Visitors on holiday from the American Panama territory complain of the heat, the mosquitoes, and the dirt, but revel in the shops, the sweets, and the Creole cooking.

"What is the most wonderful thing you saw in New Orleans?" I asked of a schoolgirl on the boat going to the Isthmus.

"The ten-cent store," she answered without hesitation.



“ And did you have pralines? ”

“ I'll say I did. ”

Our boat, which accommodated chiefly Americans returning from vacation “ back home, ” took five days over the serene blue Gulf of Mexico and across the no less serene, unwavering Caribbean from the great southern port to Colon. We passed the vague shadows of mountains in Yucatan; we stopped at a tiny tropic island to pick up a banana merchant, who, like Robinson Crusoe, lived there with a good man Friday, a dog, and many goats. Other ships passed slowly on our horizon, trailing their smokes in the sky—many of them ships which had come through the Canal steaming from Chile and Peru, or looping the new loop from Los Angeles and the Pacific ports of Mexico to New York. Passengers scanned each in turn with their glasses and made surmises of identification. As, when at home, they lived in the view of the slowly passing traffic of the Canal, they had got to know many ships, and of these they spoke as of a sort of moving scenery of their home-windows.

When the passing ship faded from the mind, the passengers, and especially the children, would return to clamorous games of deck quoits: rope rings on board and foam rings on the sea, foam rings and the rising of fish. The flying fish leapt like living silver out of the sparkling waters, and planed in air, and dipped and rose again in long travelling curves, keeping pace as it seemed with the speed of the ship.

All the passengers wore white, and the ship

itself was painted white. Everything was white except the faces and the hands of the coloured stewards. They were mostly a dark mahogany. These black men, several of whom were from Dutch Guiana, gave perfect service, and one of them, my waiter, brought in every dish at dinner in a sort of cake-walk step, keeping time to the records which another sedulously watched and changed whilst we ate.

The passengers, when they were not playing quoits, played cards. Their only conversation was of ships and men in the Canal zone, of life they knew and others didn't, the sort of exclusive talk into which it is difficult for an outsider to enter. Nevertheless I obtained much useful information about the Isthmus and the jungle, though none could tell me anything of Balboa, except that he must have climbed the hill called Mount Balboa, up which now picnic parties go on Sundays to eat their luncheon. That hill, of course, was only named in honour of Balboa, yet it is strange how even denizens of the zone will tell you it is the one he climbed.

As for the jungle outside the ten-mile-wide strip of United States territory, they told me many stories—of shooting expeditions, of men who never came back, of men who were liars who said they had penetrated into the interior. I learned for the first time of the "Forbidden Country," which is held against all comers by the Indians whose forefathers Balboa and his men fought and enslaved. I heard of the lost treasures which lie in that country: sacred treasures of Indians,

lost treasures of the Conquistadores, hidden loot of pirates of the Spanish Main, almost all now guarded by supernatural powers and the ghosts of those who once owned them.

The adventure of going into the jungle and climbing Balboa's peak began to take on a more parlous hue.

"Why not go to it by aeroplane?" I was asked. "The Colombia aerial post from Panama would take you without getting your feet wet." Quite an idea! It must be a beautiful sight from an aeroplane—the two oceans rolling gently towards one another, the attenuation of the two continents to the Isthmus, and the silver thread of the Canal.

With such thoughts the last day was fraught, and when I carried my knapsack out on the dry, clean dock of Colon harbour, that quiet, unflurrying, unflurried place, I was much amused by the difference between a gilded imagining and bare reality. The Spanish Main is indeed changed to-day where the Stars and Stripes flies over it. There are perfect arrangements for the convenience of travellers—no haggling porters, touts, sharps, money-changers, no bewildering noise, no excitement, but instead a laconic Customs officer chalking bags and trunks, a gateway, and a few horse-cabs ready to take you anywhere for a shilling.

## II. CLIMBING A PEAK IN DARIEN

### I.

COLUMBUS sought first a new way to India and glory for Spain, and then his followers sought gold and gems. Spain made a rapid transit in time. For as a young man has visions and the mature seek fame, so the old and disillusioned turn cynically to gold as the only substance which in the end will not disappoint its possessor.

Spain became old suddenly. Was it rapacity bred decay, or decay rapacity? Even the Indians, who admired all else, laughed at the Spanish lust for gold.

It was given to "the most faithful son of the Church" to discover America; given to the conqueror of the Moors to despoil it. In a time of growing heresy, word-of-mouth heresy, mathematical heresy, Spain in action wrought out one of the greatest of heresies, proving by discovery the existence of a new world.

Yet Spain reposed spiritually on a mediaeval faith, and the spirit of Protestantism rising at that time was the negation of that faith, saying "No" to the sword of the Lord and the triumphs of the saints. And Spain could not partake of the new,

for she had not that Teutonic self-questioning about conscience that stirred the North. Scandals did not scandalise Spain. And the pother about indulgences was merely disloyalty to God's viceroy. Spain had no quest after Truth. It was enough to apprehend the beautiful and the true. For the rest, she had the blind faith of the Church. Hence the ferocity of the Inquisition; hence, at a later time, the rise of the Jesuits ready to give their undivided wills to St. Peter in charge for God.

New history mocked the old when Spain began to prove that the world was round and that the little old sheepfold and pasture and Mediterranean lake made only a particle of God's creation, and that the first fifteen centuries of the Christian era had been blind to half the world.

Mankind was groping through the mediaeval forms toward a life more unconfined. On the one hand was the anchorite in his cell in the wall of the church; on the other Columbus sailing to the West. The navigator seemed a daring freethinker to his sailors, an impious man who ought to be restrained. Nevertheless, in a spirit of profound religiosity Columbus and his crew found first land and named it San Salvador, the Holy Saviour.

Devout wonder, devouring curiosity, fantastic credulity, lust for treasure, quickly followed one another in the Spanish mind. The vision ruled in the heart of Columbus, glory rose in the eyes of the monarch behind him, cupidity itched the fingers of the multitude. But the world

wondered; the old world paused whilst a new idea entered it and a seed of life was sown.

Four voyages in sailing-ships; tempestuous, troublesome, anxious, with ever more credulous and violent crews—but Columbus clung to the last to the hope of a new way East. How mysterious, how haunting and pathetic and yet visionary, the fumbling and nosing of Columbus' vessels along the coasts of Panama and Darien in that last voyage of his, sensing a place where a passage must be made! It is like the trouble of Nature before sunrise, a thought before dawn.

San Salvador is a long strip of low-lying shore, a platform above the sea, and at night a light-house beaming over the dark ocean. It is a shore and it is a light. That is what it was then, "the other side" and the light of Salvation.

The story of the first islands, those bits of Paradise vouchsafed to lost mariners, is pitiful and tragic; the story of the mainland, the Spanish Main, is violent and sinful. Adam voluntarily banished himself from Eden a second time. With the banners of the Church and the spirit of Cain the discoverers set foot in the New World.

"In the Name of God let us remain here," cried the tempest-tossed Diego de Nicuesa in 1507 when he found the quiet water of Nombre de Dios Bay. "In the Name of God! In the Name of God! *Nombre de Dios! Nombre de Dios!*" cried his followers. And there they made a colony which endured and in time made the first base for the Treasure Fleet. Balboa discovered

the Pacific in 1513. In 1519, on the shore of the other ocean, the city of Panama was founded. In 1520 Magellan rounded Cape Horn. In 1521 he reached the Philippines, where he was killed in battle. But the survivors of his ships sailed on, and reached, with no small astonishment, the Cape of Good Hope, and then made Europe, thus circumnavigating the world. Magellan called his ocean the Pacific. In 1521 Cortes got to the Pacific, crossing Mexico to Tehuantepec. In 1524 Pizarro set sail from Panama city to the conquest of Peru.

Then commenced the building of the Royal Road, the *Camino Real*, through the jungle of Darien, for the safe transit of the treasure caravans, and Spaniards enslaved Indians and made them hew a way with knives and carry the blocks of stone, cobbling it a yard wide all the way from Nombre de Dios to Panama itself.

Pearls and gold came from the South Seas, gold and silver ornaments, gems of all kinds, and then gold and silver in massive bars. The pack-trains, led by the muleteers and guarded by men in armour, toiled through the dank, hot jungle. There was built at Nombre de Dios a great stone treasure-house where the spoils were heaped up or stacked to await the coming of the galleons. The Plate Fleet, bearing to Spain its precious cargoes, became the astonishment of the ocean, firing the thoughts of pirates and adventure-seekers—and, not least, England's Elizabethan sailors. The Plate Fleet was harried; Nombre de Dios was attacked; Nombre de Dios was

burned. *Nombre de Dios* became known as "the Spaniards' grave."

I sailed there in a little boat with a wizened old man who was owner and skipper and cook and sailor all in one. And as we rode over the curling waves his talk was all of gold. There were a score of tatters in the only pair of trousers he had in the world. I advanced him ten dollars to buy provisions and oil for his little cooker. He wore a twenty-year-old straw hat; he collected newspapers, which he seemed to regard as precious in themselves. But he said, "My God!"—he was very profane—"when I get some one to put capital into my mines I shall be king." A cross between a German and a Panamanian Negro, he was at once credulous and calculating. I could not convince him that I was not seeking gold, or oil, or at least manganese. The German in him made up his mind about me. I was made to correspond to the description of my type in a Leipzig encyclopaedia. The Negro in him was fantastically imaginative regarding the treasures of the Spanish Main. He had sailed for forty years, seeking gold, seeking treasure. Far from its being a pestilential coast, Darien was Paradise. It was a health resort; there were no mosquitoes.

"This land is Aden," he kept saying, filling me with mirth, for he meant Eden all the time.

We passed, or were passed by, many schooners manned by Jamaicans, proudly and superfluously flying British flags; and by San Blas Indians in dug-out canoes surmounted by the most rudimentary sails. We came alongside and looked



on the mean cargoes of cocoanuts and bananas and on the Mongolian features of the untamable Indians. The same Indians whom the Spaniards treated so ill have long since recaptured their country and have established a feud with white man and black man. Nearly all Darien to-day is called the "Forbidden Country," and no one who is not an Indian dare remain there after nightfall. But the Indians come down to the shore, or even set off in canoes, to trade fruit and monkeys and parrots for—one thing mostly: powder. The Spanish priests tried to teach them to pray to God. But the other Spaniards brought a more convincing gospel of powder. My skipper evinced great contempt for them, however. "They'll never be no use till put underground," he averred. "All this"—he pointed to the entangled jungle of the shore—"is white man's country. Only white men can do any good here."

We called at tropical islands, all gnarled rocks and upstarting palms, places for pirates, places for loot. We called at inhabited islands, trading islands with great general stores. On these were white men making a fortune by intercepting the schooners and bartering fruit with canned goods, tools, guns, cartridges. But the wild shore of the mainland held the eyes.

Green hands of the jungle reached out from the tangles, as if all the trees and shrubs were also savages locked in some orgy in which the young and slender were being suffocated or trodden under foot. Hands of despair were stretched

outward to the sea. But when we came into Nombre de Dios Bay the barbary of the vegetable kingdom seemed to have receded as age and depravity step back for innocence. The gentlest of waves rippled forward on a fine half-round of sand. And there might well have been many children playing on that long curve of shell-strewn beach. It was peaceful. It was sun-bathed and blue and gleaming—and it was empty. Even the two schooners and the three dug-out canoes were hidden from view by the breakwater and dam. A huddled village with thatched roofs looked out from under isolated fringing palms—like grey women with shawls about their ears. In the background, a ruined church of stone.

Time stood still in the mind whilst I turned back the pages of the chronicles and saw this bay of childhood and romance as the "Spaniards' Grave." Here then lived Francis Drake in disguise watching how the Spanish shipped the treasures of Peru on to the Plate Fleet. Nombre de Dios was built in stone then, but you will search in vain for that stone to-day, unless it is in the structure of the church or in the roadway of the Treasure Trail.

"I have brought you to the mouth of the treasury of the world," cried Drake when in 1592 he captured Nombre de Dios and led his seventy-three English sailors to the stacks of bars of gold and silver there, so heavy no man could take any of it away.

Even at the moment when El Dorado's gold stood revealed, the Spaniards rallied and Drake

was shot in the thigh and his companions driven off. But the English seaman returned several times, and at last destroyed the city so that it never recovered. Drake, after many adventures, returned there to die. He ambushed the treasure-caravans, he waylaid the Plate Fleet. With his little ship *The Golden Hind* he captured the great galleon called *Cacafuego*, he burned Santa Domingo, he fought the Armada, he sailed round the world, he singed the King of Spain's beard. He played at bowls in Devonshire part of the time. But it was Nombre de Dios that held him at the last. For in a leaden coffin his body lies there somewhere under the quiet sea.

The people who live in Nombre de Dios now are in themselves the ruins of nations—Chinamen married to Negro women who are themselves partly Spanish, partly Indian; Moslem traders from India living with Jamaican girls who are half English; here lives a Polish-American trader with a mulatto. And the children! They swarm, and are just savages. Even the missionaries avoid them. Even the Catholicism to which nominally they belong has no hold. Its church has no roof—and a Padre to brave the mosquitoes is not there.

## II.

Neighbour to Nombre de Dios upon the Spanish Main is Puerto Bello, which afterward became the anchorage of the Treasure Fleet. But Puerto Bello also was destroyed, and also by one of

Albion's hateful isle, though he was by no means a true hero of romance, Henry Morgan the pirate. He blew it up; he marched with his crew, cutlass in hand, across the Isthmus, and fired Panama too, or caused the Spaniards in defence to fire it, thus wrecking the fairest city of its time in America, a city of seven thousand cedar-wood houses, two hundred treasure-houses, and three score churches with golden altars, a city already of thirty thousand souls. That was in 1671. He was rewarded by his king, after he had bought a knighthood, and was made Governor of Jamaica; he had, in fact, quite a modern career. They point his grave out to you as you sail along the shore, and every half-savage in Panama knows more of him than of Drake or Balboa. And at Puerto Bello there has remained untouched for two centuries the spectacular ruin which he wrought.

The rusty guns lie where they lay "the morning after," beside the massive stone fortifications. Spiked, useless, and yet impressive in idleness, it is surprising that they have not been taken away for use as ornaments of some new city square, or at least for the value of the metal that is in them.

Puerto Bello has a mixed Negroid population and many bamboo huts. But it has also many stone houses. It was once well laid out, and has beautiful little stone bridges and pleasure seats. The fortified part is extensive, and as one walked the ramparts, the only European, indeed the only person about at all, once more Time as it were stopped in the mind, and one realised the night

when the pirates came, and drunk and idle the Spanish soldiers and dire the fate they met.

But I left behind me the thought of Morgan at the old portal of the city where, scarcely moulded over, stand the three crosses which mark the place where for nearly two hundred years the treasure caravans came regularly and made an end of their long, arduous jungle journey, and the priests gave blessing whilst enslaved Indian coolies toiled and soldiers and sailors swore.

And the old, disused cobbled roadway plunges through sedges under the marsh and into the vegetation and darkness which has long since swallowed it up.

From Puerto Bello Morgan crossed the Isthmus; from Nombre de Dios Drake crossed it, and from "a goodlie and great high tree" looked on the waters of the South Seas for the first time. Where exactly Balboa crossed it no one knows. For no one has come that way again. But it was certainly in what is now called the Forbidden Country, which the Indians have long since recaptured and now hold by force of arms, to the total exclusion of all who are not Indians.

### III.

It was in the Forbidden Country that William Paterson landed in 1698 with twelve hundred men, gentlemen of Scotland, clansmen, old soldiers, traders, and uncovered on Darien's shore the banner of St. Andrew blessed at Leith at parting. And they mounted fifty guns and called

the fort New St. Andrew, and proceeded to organise a trade-road through the jungle, a mere fifty miles to the other side, convinced that thereby the trade of the world would begin to pass through their hands.

The expedition failed disastrously. It seems the Scotsmen were greatly discouraged by King William the Third, who loathed the Scots and ordered his governors at Jamaica and elsewhere to refuse them supplies. They were strong enough to keep both Indians and Spanish off, but they lacked adequate food, and were soon sorely stricken with fever. Their relief ship foundered off Cartagena. Paterson became temporarily deranged, for which in my opinion he was much to blame, having no right to go out of his mind whilst his responsibility was so great. Apathy, or was it despair? seized the Scots, and without realising a doit of their expectations they returned to Scotland. They had been eleven months on the Spanish Main—and some they left behind lay there for ever.

Where many died you will, however, search in vain for Scottish graves. Only the imagination, going back once more, may yield a whisper of the pipes played on that desolate shore.

#### IV.

They all sought gold; poet-discoverers, Conquistadores, heroic sailors, dastardly pirates, Scottish shareholders—El Dorado was their common goal. Even Balboa himself, raising human

eyes on the Pacific, was accompanied by those who "look nowise but downward with a muck-rake in their hands."

Balboa had settled at Salvatierra in Haiti and sailed across to Santa Maria de la Antigua on a shore of the Gulf of Darien, and was joined to a group of men whom he captained, making fantastic expeditions into the interior in quest of a massive gold idol, it, the Golden One, El Dorado, and they fought continuously the warlike Indian chiefs and their retainers, generally making the conquered their allies and seeking out another chief against whom the conquered Indians nursed some grievance.

The Indians wore ornaments of gold, as they still do to-day, but they placed no value on the metal itself until it had been fashioned to some end. But the jewellery of which the Spaniards ravaged the tribes led them to believe in some great source. Comagre gave Balboa four thousand ounces and told him that on the other side of the mountains was a great sea and cities and ships and wealth inexhaustible. And the explorer pondered the matter in his heart and he said, "God has revealed the secrets of this land to me only, and for this I shall never cease to thank Him." An astonishing idea, that God, the spiritual genius behind all creation, should be taking thought to reveal gold to thieves—and yet it was sincerely held.

It was not exactly humour that the Spaniards lacked. When the first jackass made his first heehaw on American soil, appalling the Indians, who

appealed to know what this strange animal was wanting, a Spaniard replied, "He is saying that we need more gold, still more gold; do you understand?"

Material desire and the fever of exploration drove Balboa on, and with a hundred and ninety followers in chain-mail he sailed from Antigua to the lands of the subject-chief Careta, whose daughter he espoused. This was at the beginning of September 1513. He travelled two days along the shore to the domains of Ponca, and then after a fortnight they started inward to the heart of the jungle, cutting their way with their swords, sweating under their armour, and in four days of unbelievable difficulties they came to the foot of high, tree-clad slopes. There they encountered Porque and the Indians of Quarequa. Porque they slew; the Indians they dispersed; the gold they took. That was on the 24th September, and on the next morning early, Balboa set off to climb the mountain of the world, with his Spaniards behind him and Indian guides ahead. There was with him also a priest and a lawyer and a dog. The priest was for God, the lawyer for the King of Spain, and the dog for himself. Little Lion, the bloodhound, held military rank and drew rations, it is said. He was alleged to be worth any three men.

Where is Quarequa? No one knows. Perhaps it is even an invented name, and the fight put in by the narrators to give feature to the story. How many hours Balboa's party struggled from the Indian village to the top of the Sierra



has not been calculated. Did Balboa look upon the Pacific at noon—or was it in the glamour of a later light? Possibly with his Indians to lead him it was still morning. And it was still morning in the soul—the morning of new life and light, the morning of discovery.

Balboa halted his party and then advanced alone and saw the sea.

v.

Religious geography is part of the art of living. To come to each new place on the chart called Earth, not in a spirit of mere jollity but with some reverence, gives a richness to life. Whilst some seek gold, others seek spiritual gold, the soul's possession, which is neither sentimental nor unreal but is indeed the one *substance* out of which in the beginning all things were made.

The apology of a world-traveller that he did not see the Pacific before, from the heights of Tehuantepec, from the Golden Gate of San Francisco, from the stone eminence of the new city of Panama—he preferred to see it with Balboa's eyes, climbing a peak out of the jungle and looking also and in like manner for the first time, in that way to perform a geographical rite in the world-temple.

I travelled with Cecilie Lucarez and Victor Morales. One carried my pack and a gun; the other with his long knife slashed the passage clear of jungle growth. It was icy cold and burning hot at the same time, dank and steaming; per-

spiration soaked even through the leather of one's knee-boots, but small cold airs crept out of the profound green shadow on either hand, chilling for moments the very marrow. Under foot were innumerable water currents and mud and slime, and the giant trees above us dripped water all the while. A grave-like coldness crept about everywhere, and now and then a draught of air would lift my wet shirt and make it flap against the skin. Yet it was burning hot.

The Spaniards plunged across the Isthmus in chain-mail; I was in my shirt, the Spanish Negroes without even a shirt. How the Conquistadores did it in complete armour gives a measure of the physical endurance of these men.

The ground is strewn with rotten yellow plums which have fleshy centres and bitter-sweet taste; monkeys hang from the trees looking at us, parrots innumerable flutter about the open spaces. And when we come to open spaces, how painful the sun! I am dazzled by the gleaming points of my eyelashes; eyes want to get right in, temples throb.

It is easier to cross the Isthmus in January or February, the dry season, but Balboa crossed it in the wet. It is his September and rains every day, as no doubt it did then. Up to the knees in soft mud, up to the waist in water each day, and the feet all swollen and broken by the treatment. The guides, with their bare feet and legs, seemed able to take the floods more easily, and Morales in mid-stream of a rushing torrent, with my knapsack balanced on his head and his gun

on top of that, whilst water foamed against his bare breast, is a sight not easily forgotten. Apprehension of a lost knapsack stamped it on the mind.

We rested in a jungle village. I sat on a clay floor with a wild monkey on a string and noisy children and scarcely less noisy parrots. We were regaled with kola wine and grated cocoanut and oil and rice and bits of fat pork and some of the ugliest preserves I have encountered. It was the time of the rice crop, and rice in the husk was drying in baskets in every little palm-leaf hut. Every hour the women took the rice-baskets and shook them to help dry out the grain. Next day, an aged Negro with grizzled wool led me on, and we found in the depths of the thicket that which I could not follow from *Nombre de Dios*—part of the *Camino Real*, now moss-covered and green, but unmistakable, a massive cobbling of large stones with a lateral, upturned stone along the edge for curb, just room for a panniered ass and no more, but now so overgrown in places that even a monkey could not pass on it. Trees have shot up and split the cobbling, the scrub has met over it, and for many miles it climbs amid the mahogany trees high up into the mountains.

It would be worth while for some researcher to spend a month cutting clear and tracing this great treasure-trail all the way from coast to coast. For there must have been resting-places and perhaps even taverns upon it, and possibly a chapel half-way.

The "Speakities," the coloured people of the

jungle, all believe in lost treasure and are superstitious regarding the evil spirits which are guarding it. Some have even bits of Spanish gold which have been found. Indeed, true treasure-trove is frequent—if the treasure be not great.

We made but slow progress in the jungle. Rainy weather and consequent mud held us. I changed my guides three times. None cared to go far from home. Two nights were spent in the scantiest shelter. Thousands of flaming fireflies lit the floating mists which along the edge of a jungle clearing looked like phantoms living in dark houses. The wraiths were of unstable dimensions, now swelling to a bank of mist, now tailing away to nothingness. But the fireflies lighted their way—myriads of fireflies. I lay in all the clothes I possessed and in my boots and wearing gloves, but still the mosquitoes bit. How combat a foe that you actually take in with your breath!

Tongues of fire among the white mists in intense darkness, howling of monkeys, the creaking and wailing and prolonged zzzzz of insects in the trees, mosquitoes as noiseless and attentive as breath, the air not vital, suffocating—of such were the nights. In an hotel you would turn and turn, but something in the jungle constrains you to lie like one dead all the night long, and that something also banishes thought.

There breaks out the throb of a native drum, one only, but you cannot say where it comes from. It is far away, it is close at your ear—it is wandering in the jungle. Who could be

beating it, and why? But it is no matter. Your eyes close. You fall into a light slumber and lie dreamlessly—you cannot estimate how long. But suddenly horror breaks upon your soul. You start up; you look around, you fall back in a cold sweat. A roaring as of lions has torn through your consciousness. You think a puma has found you, and then, as suddenly, you laugh and relax. It is a pack of night-howling monkeys, beating their hairy breasts high among the branches and howling like lost souls. A vague thought enters the mind, the lost souls of those who murdered Indians for their gold. . . .

Morning comes and proves that each bad night was but a bad dream, a nightmare, and not God's creation. For even over "the white man's grave" it is fresh, with fair rose colours in the sky.

The natives think that I am a *gringo* surveyor planning a new road, and are quite pleased. They have never heard of Balboa or of Drake, or indeed of any one except Morgan. They think the *Camino Real* was built about fifty years ago. They know nothing. But I found them extremely dignified and courteous. The women seemed especially modest and discreet, and those stories of the Speakities selling their young girls for a few dollars, and of the Indians selling their children, are not true except of the people on the coast, those corrupted by the traders.

The men and women are not "married," but then there are no priests. Religion is nothing to them, but something of ethics is instinctive. They

are said to be poor workers. It is hard to tempt them out of the jungle to do a day's work for pay. They do not want a victrola or a five-foot shelf of books. A few bright cottons for the women and powder for the men is all they ask. Money is scarce. In the depths of the jungle Chinamen keep little stores with a daily turnover of about twenty-five cents. An opened packet is a stock of cigarettes, and they sell them one at a time. They will even sell a half of a cigarette—the only people in the world who would undertake such a trade.

I wondered at the swarm of children of these Chinamen, begotten of their black wives. "What will you do with them when you make your fortune?" I asked one.

"The best boys I take with me to China—the rest I leave behind," he said.

I found that in the native huts I never had to pay for hospitality. It is true, however, that whole families enjoyed my provisions—gloated over tinned milk, drank mug after mug of dense *Nombre de Dios* coffee, ate chocolate as a wonderful novelty. In return, they would put in the midst of the red mud floor a large pot of rice and pieces of smoked fish and forest berries soaked in brine. They brought down branches of fat little cream-coloured bananas from the roof. A parrot would lift itself by its beak on to my fingers whilst I ate, and in the same way up my coat to my shoulder, calling and out-calling its mate, who was perched on an ox-limbed woman in coloured overalls. In such a hut I met

Martinez, a man with no hands and only one eye. He had lost his members dynamiting fish. Martinez had hooks tightly corded to the stumps of his wrists, and had learned to do all that most of us can do with hands; thus, he struck a match and lighted a cigarette, he shouldered my knapsack, he lifted down an old gun from the wall, he slung it on his back. Even using hooks for hands he was a good shot with a gun.

Martinez was by temperament a hunter, and was less interested in getting me to the Pacific coast than in following trails of wild beasts. He showed me a tree-sloth, hanging in the hammock of its own body high up among the branches; showed me a boa coiled like a cable and sleeping like a babe. That did not interest him. But the jaguar and the puma were ever in his thoughts. We came upon the footprints of a tiger, a *grande gato*, a perfect six-spot in the mud. With bent back and staring eyes Martinez was tor following it, and he gave me his long knife. But I said "No."

"No carey?" he inquired, raising his brows. "No quiere?"

"No, Martinez ; grande gato make nice meal you and me. Sabe, Martinez?" I made signs to him, pointing down my throat.

"Ah, you no carey," he rejoined sadly, and set his face toward the sun. He threaded his way to an isolated hut surrounded by bog, where lived a bachelor acquaintance more ready to follow up the trail of the tiger. There we brewed coffee, and as I sat in the doorway sipping it I

saw fly past like a flame the most beautiful bird I had seen in the jungle. The sportsmen missed it, but, heavy as I was with clinging mud, I had started up to follow it. I was tired enough of tramping, wet to the waist, mud to the knees. I had fallen down several times. Handless Martinez had offered to carry me across one or two morasses and torrents, and had actually raised me on his shoulders once, but I felt him waver under me, and took my two hundred pounds down from his back. I was glad when we came once more upon a stretch of the *Camino Real* and could actually walk upon it. We stepped steadily upward, and I began to meditate climbing that "goodlie and high tree," for there were many such starting out of the marsh and the scrub and going straight to heaven. But then, suddenly and unexpectedly, coming out on the scarp of a commanding ridge, I saw the ocean. I did not need to climb a tree. From this ridge I also saw the Pacific, for the first time, far away, a blue triangle of water beyond the hills and the forests and the ridges. There was a wide and majestic view, and the great trees of the jungle made a framework on either hand like the extended plumage of an eagle.

To my one-eyed guide it meant nothing, and he could not understand why I paused in the way and called him back. But it was a great moment. A warm current ran through my veins and something seemed to lighten heavy boots. Wings came out from my heels, and I stood on tiptoe and stared.

That phrase of Keats, "a wild surmise," came



very near to naming the feeling of rapture. The eyes of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, the eyes of Francis Drake, the eyes of the one of the many! "It was all for this," I whispered.

Martinez restlessly waved his hooks and peered at me one-sidedly. "Grande Oceano," said he reflectively, as we resumed our tramp, and he led me to the sea. It was many hours, but they went easily, and we came out to the shore in the peace of late evening, and there in a little inn we drank *blanco seco* and toasted Vasco Nuñez de Balboa and Francis Drake, whom certainly the one-eyed man did not know. But I then counted out silver dollars for Martinez and paid him off. And he was pleased.

## VI.

Balboa, it is said, knelt on the mountain alone, and then his comrades came and planted a cross. And the pious chronicler avers that *Te Deum Laudamus* and *Te Dominum Confitemur* were sung. The dog Leoncico barked for joy. Balboa in a loud voice claimed all that was visible for the King of Spain, and the lawyer whom they had brought drew up a deed which was signed by sixty-seven Spaniards—all that was left of the original hundred and ninety.

Balboa then marched to the sea. Pizarro, one of his companions, afterwards conqueror of Peru, was the first to reach the shore, and with two others they entered an abandoned canoe and were thus the first white men to sail on the Pacific.

Next day, Balboa took possession of the Ocean for the King of Spain. He did not throw his ring in the water, like the Doge of Venice taking possession of the Adriatic, but, clad only in his shirt, he marched with twenty-six of his comrades into the waves. In one hand he carried a banner of Castile; in the other a naked sword. They stood around Balboa, Pizarro, and the rest; they made crosses of steel, they kissed one another's sword hilts, they lowered the crimson banner to the water. It had been morning on the mountains and was sunset on the sea—the light of vision and then the many colours of glory sinking toward oblivion. With me also there was some of the light of romance, in the glamour of the evening on the shore of the Southern Sea.

### III. REPUBLICS OF PANAMA AND NICARAGUA

#### I.

FROM the jungle to the Canal is almost as great a leap as to New York itself—out of barbarism to the most advanced post of civilisation, the place where in all the world the Stars and Stripes waves most proudly.

President Roosevelt obtained almost as great prestige by the Canal of Panama as Disraeli did by that of Suez. In England he would have had more, but America ten years ago was not as sensible of the value of an ocean key as she is now. Disraeli never needed to make speeches on how he acquired the Suez Canal for the Empire, but Roosevelt tired the platform echoes with "I started it," "I made sure of the Panama Canal for the American people," "I let Congress talk, but the work of construction went on." Roosevelt was ready to go down to fame as the man who was responsible for the Canal. For he was by temperament a strong Imperialist, and the Canal, he knew, must prove a great factor in the future development of American commerce and in the increase of American influence in Latin-America. Roosevelt confirmed the Monroe

Doctrine in his political practice, and by achieving the construction of the Canal he gave the Doctrine an extension of application. He reserved the commercial exploitation of America for the American nations.

The circumstances of the acquirement by the United States of the trans-isthmian strip of land ten miles wide, the Canal Zone, are of minor importance to-day. The Colombian Government, to whom it belonged, haggled long over terms, as usual with the Spanish peoples trying to get as much out of the rich Yankees as they could. Colombia grossly overdid it on this occasion, and in 1902 an insurrection was arranged by the United States in that part of Colombia now called the Republic of Panama. Roosevelt ordered the Fleet to prevent the landing of Colombian soldiers. There was therefore no bloodshed. It was one of the happiest of revolutions, and a new nation was at once recognised by Washington—the Panamanian. A constitution and a government for the Panamanian nation were soon obtained, and the long-desired treaty for the acquisition of the Zone was signed.

The Panamanians, that is, the families of its "aristokratia," did well. They received ten million dollars down and a rental of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars beginning February 1913. They have become pensioners of the United States Government. What they do with the money is not very clear. The "Speakities" in the jungle do not seem to share in it; wages

of police, firemen, postmen, and the like are said to be greatly in arrear.

The Colombians, however, remained in sore dudgeon: not only had they lost territory, but golden gain, and the rebels who had stolen the territory were those who were receiving the dollars. The Government of Colombia must have felt foolish. For it is they who would have had the money. They sent north a General to seek redress. This General tried to have the matter submitted to the Hague for arbitration. As Secretary Hay saw, that would hardly have proved satisfactory to the United States, and he refused.

The General then returned home and, despite failure, was elected President. In 1909 he made a strong effort once more to obtain redress. The United States then proved willing to do something to right the wrong, and a treaty was drawn up whereby the Panama Republic should pay Colombia a quarter of a million dollars annually. The paucity of this amount so shocked the Colombians that they turned their President out, and the treaty was not signed.

In 1914 a new President of Colombia made a new attempt to get a settlement with the United States and sent his envoy, Urrutia, to arrange a new treaty. This he did, but it was seven years before the talking died down, and in a modified form it was signed. It provided for a twenty-five million dollar indemnity for "injuries," and an amendment provided that five millions should be paid within six months of ratification. Colombia

also was accorded special privileges in the use of the Panama Canal and Railroad. In exchange she recognised the State of Panama. It was signed in December 1921, and Colombia is now once more on friendly terms with the United States.

The Republic of Panama, it seems to me, has little future. Its habitable territory is scanty. In the interior are the Indians, who refuse to recognise it. It could improve places like Puerto Bello and Nombre de Dios—but it leaves that to the United States.

Article II. of the treaty they signed provides that “the Republic of Panama further grants to the United States in perpetuity the use, occupation, and control of any other lands and waters outside the Zone above described which may be necessary for the construction, maintenance, operation, sanitation, or protection of the said Canal.”

Whenever necessary, therefore, more territory can be added, should oil be found, should new harbours be desired. The importance of the Panama Canal lies not, however, in the jungle, which abuts on it on both sides, but in itself.

## II.

Though I did not visit Nicaragua in these journeyings, I think some notes on its position necessary to this study. It is the State next but one north of Panama and is separated by the small State of Costa Rica. Though Nicaragua is

broader from ocean to ocean than Panama, it has always been considered as possessing an alternative territory for a canal. This is owing to its large lake and existing waterways. British capitalists have in time past considered the feasibility of financing the construction of such a canal. The United States, bargaining with France for the price of de Lesseps's handiwork at Panama, used the rival idea of a Nicaraguan canal as a persuader. It was used also with the Colombians before the Panama revolution.

Nicaragua is therefore a State on which the eyes of America have more frequently rested than on the remainder of the Central-American republics. She has felt constrained to advise and help her, lend her money, and finally enter into virtual control.

In 1907 a war between Nicaragua and Honduras was settled by the joint efforts of Roosevelt and Diaz. The President of Mexico, who had succeeded in quelling the spirit of revolt in his own country, was ready to help in making Central America safe for democracy, and under the auspices of his ideas a Central-American Conference was held in Washington and a sort of League of Nations tribunal was set up. Soon, however, fights broke out again, and Nicaragua started against Salvador, her north-western neighbour (1909). The United States then sent down the marines to hold the Nicaraguans in check.

Nicaragua was annoyed with the United States, but, instead of showing it in action, appealed ingratiatingly for some advice and money help.

Next year the United States yielded a loan secured upon her customs dues. It is like the story of a fallen woman. A little indignant at being ravished, she looks to the ravisher for advice and a little money. He says, "You can earn a good deal under my protection. I will advance you a small sum and take it back in dues upon your custom."

In 1914 Nicaragua was fourteen million dollars in debt and much embarrassed. It was therefore not difficult for the United States to drive a new bargain. In exchange for three million dollars, the expenditure of which the United States would supervise, Nicaragua was to grant to the said United States the exclusive right to construct an inter-oceanic canal. This canal the United States naturally had no intention of constructing. The significance of the deal is that no other Power should be granted powers to construct a canal. (No competitor against the new Panama Canal.) Besides this concession, by the same treaty two small off-coast islands were leased to the United States.

Nicaragua's debts to-day, internal and external, are greater than ever. She buys all she needs in American markets. A controller sits at the receipt of custom. She is indeed still a little annoyed and corresponds with the patriots of Domingo and Cuba. The Central-American nations, including Nicaragua, have, however, concluded a new pact which brings them nearer to unity than they have ever been hitherto. This is based on the common ground of Latin sentiment,



but its binding power is that of the dollar and a mutual economic interest. The relationship of these republics with the United States is friendly enough to be called domination with consent of those dominated. It is a remarkable contrast to the belligerency of Mexico. The Central-American pact in 1923 came with a fanfare of trumpets heralding the Pan-American Conference at Santiago de Chile.

#### IV. THE CANAL

THEY tease the American children born in the Canal Zone and call them "speakity babies," but the same children, when they grow up a little, are proud of their birthplace, and say:

"I'm a Calzone boy."

"I'm a Calzone girl."

And there's a crowd of them, a real new generation of imperial Americans rising in health and pride from what was once jungle and pestilence, the "white man's grave."

The Spanish Negro natives, now generally called "Spigs," are slow to learn English, and to what they learn they commonly add the letter "y," thus—"Me no carey for you." And their commonest remark to an American is—"Me no speakity English." Hence "speakity babies" and "Speakities"—the word has come to stay.

"Calzone," which vaguely suggests to the mind undergarments, is very suitable to a swimming population and to those who live in a latitude of steam and heat, but is after all only a derivative from "Canal Zone." But "Calzone" also has perhaps entered the language.

The children of the Canal Zone are numerous.

Almost the chief characteristic of the ten-mile-wide strip of territory is the children. This is first of all due to God and the Government. The United States Government has from the first encouraged the Canal employees to marry; has given rent-free houses to married couples, and generally made it more comfortable for a married man living there with his wife than for the bachelor. The bachelor is always thinking of vacations "back home"; the married man identifies home with the place where he sees his wife and children. The Zone, therefore, is practically settled by people who are at home.

That does not entirely account for the swarms of children. Families are unusually large. There is room for children to kick about in; children fill a larger place in the affections. And then, as a doctor explained to me, "the American woman, tending rather to sterility in the North, is much more fruitful in the Tropics."

"You cannot raise children in India," said he. "But we can in Panama. Do but look around!"

The children are muscular, uncommonly active in wrestling and fighting and leaping and swimming. They afford a surprising contrast to their parents, who show some marks of climate. The children run and struggle with one another and are not annoyed by their profuse perspiration. The parents sit and watch the thousand beads of moisture forming on their bare arms. The parents do not stir but to take a cab; the children chase hoops and hop along with scooters. Cer-

tainly the children show a surprising development—many of them learn to dive and swim at four years old, but at nine years you will sometimes see boys and girls with limbs surprisingly hairy. Children also reach maturity earlier than in the North, and perhaps this brilliant rising generation of Calzones will be as pale and passive as the grown-ups by the time they are thirty.

“There are men here who have missed many ships,” I was told. They book a berth and then, when the time comes, forget; go to the Shipping Company’s office and exchange for a berth on the next ship, and then forget again.

Most army and naval officers carry notebooks to aid their memories on routine. Apathy, listlessness, no doubt, is the chief danger in Panama, and that being a spiritual danger, it is more to be regarded than the material danger of disease. You notice the difference when you arrive in Panama from the North. You stride, you rush, you soak out your clothes with perspiration, you overtake everybody, you hustle the shopkeepers, drink a whole glass in a bar whilst your neighbour has merely sipped. You are completely out of step. Then you pause and reflect; you decide to slow down, and the heat does the rest; you are soon going as slowly as any man who has missed ships.

Nevertheless the American flag does not wave listlessly. The Stars and Stripes is no jungle flag. It is the flag of business, of hustle, of enterprise. It will not droop in the tropics but lift to the trade. Whilst the climate slows down the Anglo-

Saxon American, it can never slow him down to the level of the Spanish-American. The Panamanians and the "Spigs," the lighter and the darker Spaniard breeds, half-breeds, or forest-mongrels have had all nationhood sweated out of them. They claim no affiliations with Spain or with anything bigger than themselves. But the Americans of the Zone are one with a hundred millions of kith and kin, one with the Union of forty-eight States, one with their President and with the *New York Times*, and with the Army which is always with them, and with the Navy which comes and goes.

The Calzone people are prouder of America than are most Americans who live in the States themselves. They are like the British Colonials, the Australians, the Jamaicans, and the rest, who are prouder of the Union Jack than those who

think their Empire still  
Is the Bank and Holborn Hill.

Curiously enough, the United States is fast becoming a Mother Country, and those who were originally colonists are becoming "home people" having colonial kith and kin of their own.

The Stars and Stripes at the Panama Canal has become the flag of Empire. It is the flag flying at the outposts of English-speaking America. It is more rousing and significant there than anywhere else at this time. It may droop at Washington; it may look ridiculous in the hands of Mr. Babbitt; but at Panama it is the flag of America's inevitable destiny, the flag of her sway

and of the triumph of her language, her character, and her business.

Even the mere commercial mind has grasped something of the significance of the Panama Canal. It is the greatest advertisement of America in the world. Its construction was a superhuman task, and its achievement shed a light of glory on those who carried it through. It is true that the French started the work and failed, and that Ferdinand de Lesseps and the French nation have grandiose monuments erected to them in Panama City. Frenchmen say Lesseps failed for lack of capital, but every one who has studied the work of the French there has understood that the French could never have succeeded to cut through the Isthmus. It was not only capital the French lacked, but character and imagination. America began her great national task in a spirit of human kindness by a magnificent effort to save the health of the workers. She made the Canal, but she overcame the forces of death first. She overcame the idea of the white man's grave. She rolled away the stone from the sepulchre.

What was one of the most pestilential swamps in the world is now something like a health resort. Not only is the mosquito a rarity, but also the domestic fly. After a myriad flies and two Tanglefoots a day, it was strange to arrive in an even hotter latitude and find no flies. I was told: "If you find a mosquito in your room at the hotel, telephone the office."

Not only are there no flies, but no smells, no decaying fruit. You may be arrested if you drop

a banana skin in the street. The Chinamen and the "Spigs" and the Jamaicans who live in rows of double-storey frame buildings, the sort of ramshackle places always associated with filthy living, have been terrorised into cleanly living. Hygiene has been forced on them at the point of the bayonet. Even the red-light streets are clean, and all those places of low pleasure designed to empty the pockets of seamen are at least sterilised. The women are also under control. The consequence is that the Panama Canal Zone is now a remarkably safe and healthy place. In fact, a memorandum was sent recently from Washington, part of an economy campaign, asking that the expenses on sanitary work in the Zone be cut down somewhat until the death-rate reached that of the general average of the States.

American sanitary science has shown the world that any pest-hole can be cleaned up. The sad fact is that few nations have the energy to prosecute such a work of sanitation—Greeks at Salonika, Russians on the Black Sea littoral, Negroes on the Gold Coast, Cubans at Habana. America has a passion for "cleaning-up." She is the self-constituted universal cleanser, Babbitt *in excelsis*.

It cannot be denied, however, that the United States is the home of graft. America has a long-time reputation for graft. Votes are bought in blocks. Police, jurymen, judges know the meaning of "In God we trust; others pay cash." But, paradoxically enough, the standard of American character is high. Compared with

the personal character of Mexicans, Panamanians, Cubans, it is lifted into an exalted sphere. The Latin-Americans stand around waiting for cash—that is their curse, and they are ready to sell rights, liberties, lands, children—everything for cash down.

Truth to say, if America were so eaten up with graft as her reputation says, the Panama Canal would never have been constructed. It was too big a job to be carried through by people of debauched wills. It is a monument of America's executive power, of her technical knowledge, and of her readiness to use that knowledge and stake millions upon it.

Every foreign ship passing through the Canal bows to the Stars and Stripes, and though paying a money due, yet acknowledges a debt of civilisation to the American people. Engineers, captains, tourists, crews, all obtain a new impression of America.

America ceases to be a land merely of canned goods, Yankee dialect, and oil kings. Its flag comes nearer to the Union Jack as one of world-civilising power. The ships pass deliberately through with processional slowness. Ever more ships, ever more diverse in nationality. There is a great dignity about the traffic of the Canal, like the stately manners of a bygone age. The ships represent their nations and come as guests through American waters. America is the hostess of the world.

After all, that which is most respected in the world is visible achievement. And whilst bad



manners generally accompany sham strength or actual weakness, good manners are enjoined by the sense of power. A prophecy of more than two hundred years' standing, made by the founder of the Bank of England, hails the possessor of "these doors of the seas" as the coming law-givers of both oceans and the arbitrators of the commercial world. The Panama Canal delivers Central and South America to Wall Street, to the American commercial commonwealth, to the American people.

Every month just now sees the traffic record broken. More and more ships pass through. More and more business is being done. What will be the normal average traffic, no one yet can tell. The Canal was opened in the gloom of the War. There were slides of silt which closed it again and a war-menace which overcast its importance at the time. Its real significance has been overclouded, and all praise has been under-praise. It must necessarily now shine forth more and more as one of the maritime gates of the world, looked to from England, China, Australia, from the Pacific coasts of North and South America, and from all the islands of the South Seas. It automatically doubles the trade of the Southern and Central American republics of the Pacific coast with the United States. The latter can make up all European losses and most deficiencies in raw materials by way of the Canal. Whilst the American flag certainly waves less on European waters, it waves more on the Pacific Ocean. Pan-Americanism, the dream of Stephen

Douglass and many others, is carried nearer to realisation—the dream that America should rule all the way from the Canadian line to the Isthmus, without question and without regret.

That the United States will ever rule south of the Equator seems questionable. Such a rule belongs possibly to the twenty-second rather than to the twentieth century. But already she has a predominant economic hold on South America. As regards Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and the rest she begins to have an imperial control. Despite the noise of protest, there is not much real patriotic stamina in the people of these countries. They have less sense of nationhood than is supposed. Almost all rights can be bought from them for cash down. So they are facilely subject to the influence of America's capital.

The Old World is greatly jealous of America's imperial march forward, and will naturally follow the progress with much malignity. And the Radicals and Liberal idealists within America have already raised a cry which must yet sound much louder. Empire was never foreseen by the fathers of the Republic. It is opposed to the historical conception of American liberty. It makes the Declaration of Independence more out of place than ever. But what is to be done? America, by her big business and the system, is betrayed to an imperial destiny, and cannot help herself. Her vast surplus of capital, her gold accumulations, must in the human way of necessity find an outlet for use. The West has been exploited. The Old World is distrusted.

There remains inevitably and obviously the South.

"Go South, young man!" is being substituted in the consciousness of the American for the old cry of "Go West!"

The inwardness of the idea that Jamaica, Barbadoes, Bermuda, and the rest of the British island-possession of the Indies should be assigned to the United States in part payment of the war-debt, still discussed despite the Baldwin settlement, is part of the new American march to the South. The control of Cuba, Haiti, and Santo Domingo is part of it. The sapping of Mexico and Nicaragua is part of it. Without the Canal as an inalienable possession these things might be overlooked, might indeed be gone back upon by America herself. But a mere visit to the Canal is said to have power to change an American Radical into a patriotic Expansionist. In fact, with regard to the direction of policy and the achievement of national destiny, Radicals in America seem more negligible than the German Socialists proved to be in 1914. On the whole they do not deserve the persecution they have had. They live by the system and are carried along by the system, and the system leads to American imperial power.

It is urged, however, that Empire means war. It means bloodshed and sorrow and despair for thousands in every decade of its history. That is generally true. And yet America is remarkably free from enemies. The Latin-Americans have a practice of hating Americans, calling them

“Gringos,” “Mejos,” and the rest, but it is a weak hate easily transmutable to respect and warm regard. There is nothing to fear from them. Great Britain is of course a mercantile rival on the high seas, but America and England are too much inter-married and too much intertwined in business interests to fight a war. Moreover, we speak the same language. Mutual abuse is merely partisanship, the slang of the fanatics; and we are no more likely to fire on one another than the Giants of New York and the Red Sox of Chicago. As regards the Canal—that is the sort of strategic position Britain has historically seized when she had a chance. But one thing is sure: Britain rejoices in the fact that that waterway is in the hands of people who speak English and have the standard Anglo-Saxon point of view. In the case of a war, even with Japan, Great Britain would probably lend her aid to the United States to keep the Canal open and to safeguard it from destruction.

Japan remains as the only serious potential enemy on America's horizon. And despite ill-feeling and hot words one cannot but remember that that horizon is several thousand miles away. There is a great stretch of cooling water between the nominees for the next great fight. The only real danger lies in the brains of some heady politician who at some future date may decide on an aggressive war against Japan in her own waters. Such a war might conceivably be fraught with disaster and humiliation for the United States—

for the vast Pacific will always aid the side which is in defence.

In short, as far as America is concerned, Nature is on the side of Peace. I foresee five hundred years of prosperity and peace, after which no doubt America will weaken. The growth of the American Empire is the greatest fact in the world to-day—more significant than the decay of Europe. Russia, one must remember, is smashed, with her whole nation down on a gipsy level of culture. Germany, prostrate under the heel of France, nears the condition of Russia. France herself is self-centred and contented with a Mediterranean Empire. Britain marks time. Alone America goes on. She stands now with her hundred million educated population, with her vast wealth and serried ranks of millionaires, with her unsurpassed technical equipment and industrial organisation, and she has an enormous appetite for power and zest for life. The imagination ought to be given free play in thinking of the coming time.

Bearing in mind that America has finally and absolutely rejected Bolshevism, Communism, and all other disjunctory theories of government, has in fact affirmed in absolute fashion the rights of property and her loyalty to the capitalistic system, one can almost forecast by mathematics the state of her wealth at any given date. What a stupendous aggregation of material splendour! If in the last sixty years America has risen from Civil War level to what she is to-day, to what will she rise in sixty years from now? To what will she

rise in six hundred years? The mind refuses to give the answer to the sum, but instead whispers the lines:

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget !

It is so easy to forget.

How the soul of America will fare in all this I have not sought to know. The soul abhorreth a golden treasure-house, preferring greatly a humble and a loving heart. America is one thing not answerable to God. Americans will find themselves in America, as Romans found themselves in Rome. Individually, now as ever, and like the rest of us, they will have to find their personal way of salvation.

One thing which the great world-war seems to have revealed is that we are physically subject to forces over which we have little or no control. These forces are generally called economic, and are thought to be academic and theoretic. That is a mistake. They are elemental and primitive; Lloyd-Georges and Wilsons do not divert them. On the contrary, they themselves sweep statesmen away when the time comes—and sweep other statesmen into power.

Such a force drives the American flag southward, and the cry is heard, "Go South!"



BOOK V  
QUIVIRA AND THE SEVEN CITIES  
OF CIBOLA





## I. PANAMA TO NEW YORK

I SAILED to New York from Colon on one of those transports designed for the use of Canal employees. When the berths are not all taken by officials and their wives the remainder are sold to the general travelling public. The distance of the voyage in nautical miles is 1974, in dollars it is a hundred, and in time it is six days. The accommodation is one class only, with no steerage passengers.

It meant six more lazy days similar to those spent sailing from New Orleans. The passengers seemed merrier going to New York than the others did coming home. Most of them had the money for a good time in their pockets, but the others had spent theirs and were sobered.

There is little that need be said of the voyage. Though late in September, it was sultry and breezeless. We kept expecting a coolness and a change, but it was not until the fifth day that the North touched us, and that was a day of packing, of coming out in "shore clothes," of putting on unsuspected overcoats and bowler hats. The ship's company changed itself from white-clad Central-Americans into sombre New Yorkers. The sky itself grew overcast. More serious ex-

pressions crept into people's faces as late next afternoon we steamed up the Hudson into the presence of Manhattan, grand and grey.

I had promised to meet Wilfrid Ewart in New York and return South with him to Santa Fe; he would buy a horse and ride with us, study the Mexican Border, and write; I would spend some time there before going on to Mexico. He and I had been during the last few years something like inseparables—at least in London. I knew, as I waited in the harbour, that he was there somewhere in the great city. I knew also that my friend Vachel Lindsay was there, and it was a special pleasure to think of meeting both friends. The three of us had sat at a table in a café in Regent Street late one night two years before, and the project of Ewart's going to America had been mooted. Lindsay drew a map of the United States upon the table and marked Santa Fe on it and then drew radii from it. "A mud house and a pony are all you want, and you will see America," said the poet. Paradoxically enough, he asserted that America could be studied to better advantage in her deserts than in her cities.

I believe that in the ordinary course of life Ewart and Lindsay could hardly have met for mutual benefit. I was the human link; assuring Ewart of Lindsay's genius, assuring Lindsay of Ewart's promise. The reserved, almost inarticulate young Guards officer brought forth in due time his *Way of Revelation*, and Lindsay hailed it with delight and advised his New Mexican friends that the author of it was coming.

The idea of America, and especially of the South, certainly fired Ewart's imagination. He longed to go to New Orleans—that city for which in a way he had been bound when later he was so tragically killed. The idea of my journey to the Spanish Main also caused him to crave to share in its adventures. I remember our last dinner together in 1921—it was one night between Christmas and New Year. Wilfrid Ewart raised his glass solemnly and pronounced a toast. "To 1922, and may we both stand together on that Peak where in one view Pacific and Atlantic meet!" I had been talking to him of Darien, and then of Mount Zempoaltepec, in Mexico, whence at one moment you may see both oceans.

I smiled, we talked, and in my heart I doubted he would come, but he did. Alas, now, for the train of circumstances! He came, and he is lost.

I was waiting in the harbour and he was in the city. It is so perhaps still. I was answering once more those endless questions: "Are you in favour of subverting existing government by force?" "Only in such a case as that of Colombia in 1902," I might reply. That will not be taken as an answer. Am I a polygamist? "Ever been deported?"

The questioning is interrupted by the discovery of an abduction case. Hours pass; it was nearly eight when I got free.

As I walked out of the dock gate in white coat, riding breeches, and knapsack on my

shoulders an impatient cabman cried out—"Now the caballeros are coming." But I hastened to a street car and then to Forty-second Street and the Hotel Commodore, that temple of the Calf, in which my poet had chosen to stay. And he knew where Ewart was staying. So we were joined again, the three of us, as we had been in London two years before.

Vachel, at that time engrossed by classic Art and modern American politics, was an enigma to Ewart. The American's enthusiasms were bewildering to the Englishman just fresh from our "no - enthusiasm - for - anything - that - matters" atmosphere of England. One thing, however, both admired, and that was Broadway at night all lit up, from the colour reflections on the road-crowds up to the stars in the sky. But they admired it in different ways. Ewart admitted the grandness of America but never felt its greatness. For New York he obtained an admiration which had not learned its bounds. He knew it as the greatest piece of human magnificence he had seen. Central Park was his favourite haunt, and many an afternoon he walked there and watched, in the evening, the fade-out in the dusk, and then the lightning, the starring, the flaming, the rising of the brightness, and then at last the fast-pouring floods of electric illumination.

Life for me in a giddy New York week changed incredibly from the languor of the tropics to the ardour of the North. It was meetings at luncheon, meetings at dinner, theatre every night, business letters, telephone messages in consecutive

half-dozens, rolling about in "overheads" and "undergrounds" and cabs. I knew I should be glad to get away.

Half way through my time I had to leave the Commodore Hotel, that temple of the Calf, as I have called it. It had been requisitioned for the Bankers' Conference. The poet had been installed longer than I had—they could not turn him out. But me they could. I went across to the quieter old-fashioned "Murray Hill," to be still near to my two friends. It was a great sight at the Hotel Commodore, next day, when the bankers had arrived—from every State in the Union, and every banker wearing a crimson silken tag which told the name of his bank and his little town. Thousands of little bankers, scores of big ones, swarmed in and out of the vast hall of the hotel. And they all walked with becoming gravity and aplomb. It was the "greatest conference of the century." On the table was the question of Europe's unpaid debts; the bankers felt, and indeed they had been told by their leaders, that upon them depended the solvency of the Old World.

One afternoon whilst we paced the stone hall and talked, the orchestra began to play the "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," and this set the thirty or forty canaries who perch in their gilded cages above the foyer palms all a-singing. Such a joyous hubbub then ensued in that great hall, of golden birds and bankers' tongues and tinkling brass. Somewhere afar a bank-president was orating ponderously. But added to that a

man with a megaphone upon the mezzanine balustrade described a baseball game in the "World Series." The architecture of the place, with its colour and lighting effects, the frame of our gilded society, was superb; the human attendance behind marble bars was busy, bowed, attentive, all that man could wish. Every banker in America seemed to be pulling his weight, every facial expression was at par. There was a sense of the coffers behind them and the business and power they represented. So the afternoon band kept playing its elaborately orchestrated tune, child's tune, from the "Chauve Souris"—not exactly the "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," something grander and yet delightful, titillating, perhaps the "Parade of the Little Golden Bankers" instead.

It was well to go to New York, if only to refresh one's memory as to where the power all comes from. The cranes swing round the great crates from the ships to the docks at Porto Rico; or it may be at Colon, or Puerto Plata, or Habana, or Vera Cruz. American agents tick them off. They go to the warehouses, thence to the shops, to the houses. The gold that buys them goes to the banks, and the banks send it on to New York—golden New York, golden America, one may say.

To New York, the gold, and above the gold, the power. Some one may whisper—What of Washington? Washington is New York's stenographer. Or what of Chicago? Chicago is New York's young brother. Or San Francisco?

San Francisco is the reflection of New York's sky-scrapers in the Pacific.

With this the poet both agrees and disagrees. New York is the crown of the America of this age. It is Babbitt's work. The bankers are the big men now. But they have not all the power they think. A turn in political history, and the bankers' influence might be gone. Lindsay will demonstrate this to me if I will spend a summer harvesting westward from Texas to Alaska. Ewart is ready to accept the idea. In the deserts of the South-West we shall see more of America than in New York. That I doubt, but Ewart and I will go. My wife is at Santa Fe and awaits us. To Santa Fe, then, spiritual lodestone of artists and poets! To the capital of the new State of New Mexico, merely a conquered territory until 1912, now capable of being thought the spiritual hope of the United States!



## II. AMERICA OF TO-DAY VIEWED FROM NEW YORK

### I.

"WE don't know where we are going, but we're on the way," runs a light-hearted popular saying. "Heaven or Hell—which?" the evangelists ask in one breath. No national answer will be given to the query; but if some one replies "Hell," no one will be greatly shocked; whereas if some one replies "Heaven," his neighbour will turn upon him with a smile and a rude handshake and a "I'm with you; so glad that you're on our side."

If you say "Roses spring up in the footsteps of America," Americans will believe you. But if you say "Curses follow the Gringo in his march of destiny," the American interest in your opinion will rapidly grow less. America's faith in that America is doing right, that she has a divinely appointed mission, is short of nothing save the faith of the Catholic Church. Naturally such a faith is the main vital current of her existence. The saying, "I believe; therefore I am," may be changed for America into "I believe; therefore I do."

This faith, however, reacts badly upon critical literature. Many books on America are written

for an American public which demands praise. The rest of the world is profoundly affected by what America does, and will be even more so by what she will do. For as she plunges forward along her way of destiny, be it blindly or with open eyes, she not only achieves for herself, but makes way and changes the ways of other peoples and other nations.

Some study in a scientific spirit seems necessary at this hour, not one tinged with the spleen of France, or the self-consciousness spirit of comparison of England; not a pro-Latin study, nor a study conceived in *parti pris* from a socialistic or capitalistic end—but a dead-level dispassionate facing of things as they are and as to honest eyes they tend to be.

## II.

In England and Scotland the working-class population exceeds in number the middle and upper classes. Enfranchised as it is, men and women both, it has the political power to seize the reins of government and take control into its hands. In America the situation is considerably different. Numerous as is the working-class in America, it is outnumbered by the middle class. And the middle class is more comfortable, more self-assured, than that class in England. In England many middle-class people are so cramped and pinched economically that they are embittered against the rest of society and are ready to throw in their lot politically with Socialists and Radicals.

In British journalism there is much talk of the "Have-nots"—but such an expression would mean little in America: the Haves are so numerous that other people are not heard. What I mean is: the sense of property is capable of being more widely and more strongly developed even than in Britain.

With other nations one might make an even more striking comparison. Russia is a nation of "have-nots"; Germany is a nation of a few rich and of broad poverty-stricken masses. Or to come nearer to the countries now under view, one may say of Mexico that poverty is national there. In America possession is national. The dollar is in America almost a national emblem.

There we have a very marked fundamental condition for future development. Britain is in danger because her masses do not obtain a fair share of the prosperity of the country as a whole. America is not in that sort of danger.

It may be urged that America has a violent Labour element, and that she has been harassed by such prolonged strikes as that of the coal operatives, the steel workers, the railway men. It is true that there is a violent element, but that element is foreign and illiterate. The real under-dog in America is the foreigner and the coloured man. He is not regarded as a fellow-citizen but as a hired mercenary, one in a gang of Chinese, a member of a slave caste. Even if he has his papers as a United States citizen he finds, like Eugene O'Neill's stoker—the "Hairy Ape"—that he does not really "belong."

Skilled men, craftsmen, artisans, shopmen, what in England we call the "respectable" working-class, have in America no consciousness of inferiority. They have their Ford cars and their "Victrolas," they dance, the men wear ironed trousers, the women "bob" their hair. They are affiliated to religious organisations, they are also masons of some rite, probably not Kiwanis nor Elks, but Red Men perhaps. In politics they almost infallibly vote Democrat or Republican. Labour politics make no progress, because in the many millions they have only many thousand votes.

The American government machine is guaranteed against Radical interference for a long time. For Republicanism is founded on the Banks of America, and Democratism on the industries. Both parties are based solidly on the rights of possession, the rights of property, the rights of capital.

### III.

American commerce therefore enjoys a remarkable sense of security. No draught blows from Russia or elsewhere into the comfortable interior where the game is being played. Production on an ever grander scale is achieved; the wealth of the nation is enhanced, the buying power of every individual is increased, the triumphs of salesmanship are eclipsed, the glory of the great firms is brighter and fuller, their advertisements more extensive.

The enormous production is a fact, and not

to be gainsaid. But in their commerce as a whole there are certain very important artificial elements which show it in part not as a reality but as a great game. A number of fortunes are made; that again is not to be gainsaid, and material luxuries are widely distributed—but the picture of American comfort is not so good as it looks. As the American saying puts it—"there's a catch somewhere."

The catch is in the tariff. The tariff makes sure that Americans shall buy American-made goods at the American price. Salesman and buyer are tied together in a three-legged race, and the tariff is the binding matter. For if the tariff were removed there would be a bad falling apart of producer and consumer. All prices in the United States seem to me higher than world-prices. Therefore if the tariff were removed cheap foreign goods would naturally rush in. America can make a good article at a good price; it is yet to be proved that, like pre-war Germany, she might make the best article at the lowest price.

This not only affects manufactured goods, but food. The tariff plus commercial organisation has raised the cost of food to fifty per cent above world-price. The mere food budget of the American housewife is nearly double that of her European sister, though the food be of the same quantity. I say not quality, because European food is almost always sold more fresh than American food; "Storage" is the enemy of good quality.

American salesmen outside of the New World

fail to obtain the quantity of business which their enormous commercial background would suggest. It may be said, if with pardonable exaggeration, America is not as aggressive in world-markets as she is at home. In finance she has become a world-power, but the bulk of her trade is in North and South America.

Within America, within the American Empire, in Latin America generally, the American salesman has matters more and more his own way. It may well be asked—if he possess the New World what need has he of the Old?

The Old World has not, however, necessarily finished with America, and European business only awaits its chance to descend upon American lands. A great economic competition between East and West is not one of the least likely developments of the future—let but Europe find peace once more.

#### IV.

Meanwhile, however, American prosperity increases on a grand scale, and the chief sign of it is increased leisure. The leisured class grows. It far outnumbers the leisured class of England or of any other nation. There are more Americans than English at Monte Carlo, more Americans in Switzerland, in Egypt, on the Norwegian fjords, in Athens, in Rome, in Northern Africa. There are many thousands of leisured Americans in London and at the shrines of England and ensconced in English country-houses or enjoying

the hospitality of country gentry—very greatly more than there are leisured Englishmen or Frenchmen or any other nationality at the shrines or country-houses of America.

In America the leisured appear everywhere. The East is larded with leisure; the West runs on it as on oil. Care-free children in tens of thousands get educated, graduate, and have leisure. Something has to be done for the children of leisure—to make life more interesting.

A life of cars and country clubs will not suffice—especially for the women, who are almost always more ambitious than the men. There is a demand for careers by those who do not necessarily demand pay, a demand for greater interest. The Astors have found admirable scope in British politics. Such success as Lady Astor has attained is doubtless open to a few more. Americans range in surprising numbers behind successful British politicians, delighting in entertaining them when they can. Various very good-looking and capable Americans hold as it were advanced posts in English society life. The competition to be presented at Court is greater each year, though greater numbers are actually received. The American Embassy is broadened out to an extensive social platform crowded with people whose estate and position in American life is such that they can hardly be ignored.

The diplomatic service generally in Europe is greatly used by the leisured Americans, and there come people with academic missions, advisory people of various kinds, who for one reason or

another obtain interviews with distinguished men and then arrange dinner-parties and talk, obtain impressions, get inside, have a finger in the pie.

That same force drives in American politics at home, by intrigue and by lobbying, trying to find a way of life, a larger interest, for the leisured. The American Republic, the old United States, affords little scope for the new ever-increasing class. But America as an Empire, America with a great Army and a great Fleet, America with a deep foreign policy which kept foreign powers all speculating on her next move, America as a world-power would give scope.

Most abhorrent to the leisured class is the primitive State; most desired is the State in its highest development. For a leisured class is not compatible with pure democracy. The present commercial system, however, is producing a leisured class in ever greater numbers. Does it not therefore follow that the commercial system itself is incompatible with pure democracy?

v.

But of course it is not the four hundred of New York who are New York, but, as O. Henry briefly and brilliantly suggested in his book of stories, it is the four million—and no upper four thousand or upper forty thousand can be America.

Indeed in many vital matters the forty thousand have been thwarted by the hundred million. The forty thousand did not want Prohibition and they were not eager for the enfranchisement of



women. The forty thousand at least professed themselves in favour of the Versailles Treaty and ready to help Europe to peace. The "representative" American in Europe nearly always treats Prohibition as a joke, or blames it on the women's vote, and as regards our European tangle is all optimism and happy encouragement.

English celebrities in America, entertained by Tom Lamont or one of the other millionaires who can get what they want, come back to England telling of a drunken America.

You would not think that America was a pious God-fearing country, with some millions of people leading sober and righteous lives and yearning for the establishment of the Kingdom. The moral passion of the American masses is kept out of sight as if it were something pitiful or disgraceful. The forty thousand would not care to see America defined as—*the nation which voted itself dry*. It would rather define America as—*the nation which built the Panama Canal*. There is in a way a conflict between the claims of moral achievement and material achievement. Thus again in some minds America is—*the nation which won the War*, but in many more she is—*the nation which fed starving Europe*. To many she is—*the nation of Roosevelt*, but to many more she is *the nation of Abraham Lincoln*. Still to-day the moral passion of America identifies America, and it is a pity that the world outside, and even part of America herself, should be deceived by the noisy jazz-band exterior by which America seems to choose to signalise herself to the world.

To what an extent America has been "cleaned up" has never been divulged to the outside world. The forty thousand are ashamed of it. The others do not travel much and have little means of comparison. It is not only that drunkenness has been eliminated, but vice of other kinds.

"What an extraordinarily moral city, compared with Paris or London!" was Wilfrid Ewart's surprised remark to me. And he had been walking Broadway at midnight without remarking a single *fille de joie*. And in order to make a test of the alleged "wetness" of America, Vachel Lindsay and I made a tour of the old bar-rooms of New York. The poet was for several years a Y.M.C.A. worker, and he had a round of bar-rooms, visiting them all regularly, and distributing literature relating to activities other than the consumption of beer. We made a remarkable pilgrimage together.

By every reckoning New York and Chicago are the richest fields for the "boot-legger" that America holds. If you can prove that these are relatively free of liquor you can be sure that the rest of America is very free. What did we find?

In one old bar, one bar-tender, four or five loungers with pots, and in the back a solitary foreign woman resting her bare arms on a sodden table, waiting for a customer. Every one regarded us suspiciously and nervously. Another bar had been converted into a restaurant; there was a look-out man at the door, and he worked a STOP-GO traffic indicator in the restaurant. When the indicator turned to STOP, the customers

put their drinks under the table; when it returned to go, they brought them out again. That seemed to us a pretty flagrant case of "wetness." But, as Vachel remarked to me, even there all the objectionable aspects of the saloon have been removed. No one objects on moral grounds to people having wine with their meals. It is the filth, the vice, the point of view of the bar-room that America fought, and these can never come back.

Five or six large saloons had been converted into shops; sometimes one saloon into three shops, leased for considerable spaces of time and quite lost to drinking. Those bars which remained, shut or pitifully selling bad beer, seemed to be holding on to valuable sites in the hope that after all there might be a reversal of the Prohibition Law.<sup>1</sup>

But Prohibition is now part of the Constitution; it was adopted by many States prior to 1917, it has been enacted separately by all the States as well as by the Federal Government, and to go back on it it would have to be voted out by a majority of the States of the Union once more—which is unthinkable.

Wilfrid Ewart made many jests at the expense of the Statue of Liberty. All new-come Englishmen do. How can it be a "sweet land of liberty" when one's liberty to have a drink is taken away? is a favourite query.

The true answer to that question is that

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above, many shut saloons have reopened, owing to the action of the Governor of New York State, who has made it illegal for the local police to interfere and has cast the responsibility upon the Federal Authority.

America, like England, is governed by majority opinions. The majority of American citizens wanted the abolition of the saloon, and they got it.

As regards the advantage of it, I saw New York in 1913 and can compare its huge gin-palaces of that time, the swarms of unfortunate girls going in and out, the police exploitation of them, the night-court for women on Sixth Avenue with cleaned-up New York in 1922. The advantage seems inestimable.

As regards the reality of Prohibition, I will say this—Even near the Mexican Border, after a forty-mile ride in the snow, when one would give a good deal for a stiff drink, not a rancher but was a teetotaller.

The little cities of America are now totally devoid of public vice. The prisons of Kansas are empty. In the large cities the police are notably impoverished. It is no use the foreign tourist going to the police and saying, "Show me the vice of your city." There is nothing to show. Go a round of the ice-cream parlours. Yonder in a small den loving couples are eating hot tamales. On a corner a youth is surreptitiously lighting a cigarette. The nation is on a high level of morality, and this is reflected in the physique of its children. With all this, I ought perhaps to make a warning—there is almost no religion. Moral fervour stands instead of religion. The note of wonder, of awe, of divine praise is almost entirely absent.

The upper forty thousand, as I have said, take little heed of this. They believe that they control

the springs of action and can make the hundred million do what they want them to do. The party system in politics, with no other choice but that of Republican or Democrat, seems to facilitate their influence. "Cleaning up" is a passion of the hundred million; very well, it can be harnessed to the designs of the forty thousand. Let them "clean up" Cuba, "clean up" the Central American Republics, "clean up" Mexico.

## VI.

One thing the hundred million will not tolerate in their midst, and that is a foreign point of view in morals. The "dago" will do things no "white man" will stand. So also will the Hun and the Hunky, the Slav, the Greaser, the "nigger." An associating of foreigners with unnatural vice is all too common. The fair-skinned Anglo-Saxon, despite all admixtures, remains the dominant type. He rejects the melting-pot. He alone is the hundred-per-cent American and will not be adulterated. He is opposed to colour, to all dark skins, be they Italian or Ethiopian, and he is opposed to European religions, which seem to permit low morals. Out of this has arisen on the one hand the spirit of Hearst's newspapers, on the other the new development of the Ku Klux Klan.

It is this movement largely which has shut the door to further immigration from Europe. The idea was obtained during the war that American ideals and standards had become endangered by a too great influx of foreigners into America.

The Germans, the Russians, the Irish, all forgot that they were Americans first—all the “hyphenates” waved their flags of origin. This naturally caused the lurid limelight of the Press to be turned upon the foreign elements in the midst, and it was seen how differently the foreigners lived and how much lower were their moral standards.

Even whilst America seemed to be fighting for Europe, her opinion of Europeans, never high, was suffering a severe depression. It is a national fact to-day that America trusts no foreigners.

#### VII.

Provincialism is widely spread. People are not only ill-informed but credulous, and the Press reflects their state of mind. A country like Russia might almost be in the moon, to judge by current opinions concerning her. Doubtless it would be absurd to go to America to obtain information about Europe.

On the other hand, education goes further in America than in any other country. You often hear exaggerated statements of what the Russian Bolsheviks are doing for the education of the Russian masses—they have “voted” and “assigned” and “planned”—and they have no teachers. But America has teachers and schools, the best equipped in the world. She is ready to spend money; she has faith in education, she has the will to get it. The High Schools of America are very remarkable, both in the number of them and in their size. Americans who have not

travelled in the old home countries of Europe can hardly measure what magnificent institutions they have in their public schools, and what an advantage the average American child holds over the average child of any other nation.

Again, the number of colleges and universities is phenomenal. It reflects, no doubt, the wealth of America and also the turning of the back upon America's raw, primitive, uncouth past. England, by virtue of her history, is too phlegmatic to do much for the higher education of the masses.

I sent ye to school and ye wadna learn,  
I bought ye books and ye wadna read,

is the traditional attitude of the Briton. "Too much of school makes Jack a dull boy," says he, and takes his boy away. In this I believe the Englishman is largely wrong. The dull ignorant part of our population is far larger than it ought to be and constitutes a national danger.

How far education in America is ahead of education in England may be judged by the size of the reading public. Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria* has five readers in America for every one in England. A similar ratio existed for Maynard Keynes's *Economic Consequences of the Peace Treaty* and for Wells's *Outline of History*.

There is therefore an educated class far in excess of the upper forty thousand. There may be a whole million of well-read people. And the number progresses with the children who swarm through the new big schools and universities.

## VIII.

Where is it all going? Is it drifting southward to the Indies and to Mexico, to Empire? Will it stay where it is and wax more illustrious? "Tell me where you have come from and I will tell you where you are going," saith the Cynic. "An evil crow, an evil egg." America as a nation was born in the throes of the War of North and South. Or it rose out of Washingtonian independence and Jeffersonian idealism. Or it arose from the Puritanism of the Pilgrim Fathers, or from the adventure spirit of the gentlemen of Virginia. From such origins one could chart some kind of destiny. But not with surety. One must go further back to the spirit of Elizabethan sailors, to Drake, and a thousand others. Latin America derives from the Conquistadores of Spain, but the Anglo-Saxon America derives as surely from the English conquerors. America was Imperial before she was Democratic, and English before she was American. But then again the English, or at least the Saxons, were a sturdy independent race, intolerant of bondage, urgent for their civic rights, always proud of freedom. If there is one thing that is with difficulty soluble in Anglo-Saxondom, it is character. It is by virtue of character that England has been a ruler of peoples, and possibly again it is character as much as business and excessive wealth and a leisured class that will lead America along her road of destiny. It is still in the air as to which road that will be—the way of Roosevelt or the way of Lincoln.



### III. ACROSS AMERICA NORTH-SOUTH

EWART was much surprised by the politeness of Chicago. If he made a mistake in New York, such as to bring his lighted cigarette into a car of the overhead railway, he met with such rebukes as *Put that cigarette out! Put-it-OUT!* But as the porter put our bags into the cab at Chicago he cried out to us: "Good luck, boys!" and gave us a cheery salute. Perhaps we overtipped him. And when we got to Santa Fe a salesman in a shop selling Ewart a shirt called him "brother."—"This pattern, brother, is what you want." I explained to my friend that the lower orders in New York were Lithuanians and the like, who had only just learned enough English to be impolite in it. He must not judge the manners of America by them.

We spent a Chicago morning in Marshall Field's and "The Fair," trying to buy a pair of canvas shoes with rubber soles and brown leather facings, something Ewart had seen on the boat and fancied. The foreman of the floor-walkers of the huge department store examined his chart, saw at a glance which salesmen were occupied and which were waiting, and assigned us to one who was straightway called. That young man

proceeded to try and sell to us, not what Ewart wanted, but what he had got; brought out box after box of shoes, and even persuaded him to try on a pair of shoes of an entirely different style. "But what I mean is a sort of a tennis shoe with leather toe-caps. You know what I mean," said Ewart. "You want Oxfords," decided the salesman, and passed him on to another department. Thence we were transferred to a subdivision of the athletic department, and then got back to "Shoes." Here another salesman proceeded to show us all that we had seen before, assuring us, however, that he had just what we wanted.

After that we spent an hour in that crowded chaotic emporium called "The Fair," where the procedure was different. A very busy pre-occupied salesman, tending six or seven anxious bargain-hunting Chicagoans, assured us he had just the thing, got Ewart with his boots off, gave him a pair of white tennis shoes, "just to get his size," and left him stranded for a full quarter of an hour—whilst as it seemed all Chicago swirled past, gossiping, buying, clamouring, jostling, and in the midst of this great shop crowds of children went up and down a moving staircase for fun.

I believe that both in Marshall Field's and "The Fair" shoes of the kind wanted were in stock, but the salesman's habit was to show just what he was put in charge of—he had become incapable of the mental process of imagining what a customer might describe as his need. In England a shopkeeper has to pay much more

attention to individual wants. If he has not got a certain thing he will get it. Americans buy much more from what is spread before them than by choice and need.

However, without the shoes, we left "The Fair" for the less crowded streets, and had lunch in a restaurant on Dearborn. My friend had ordered roast beef. "The thing to have here is 'hot dog,'" said I.

"No, really? I say, I think I'll change that order. Have you—er, have you hot dog?"

"Sure," replied the waitress with alacrity, and she brought him back two large sausages, crisp and burst at one end.

"Some dawgs, I'll say," smiled the girl as she put them before him. He did not put them away coldly from him. He ate his dogs, and was amused. He was getting what they call "an angle on America."

"Not bad 'eats,'" he said with a twinkle. "I'll remember that. In Chicago I ate dog."

In two or three days one can hardly see Chicago. It is a more important place for studying America than is New York. For it is more characteristic. The lights of the capitals of Europe all shine in New York. It is a city of a hundred good-byes. But in Chicago one light burns, and that is the light of America. It is a city of a hundred good-mornings.

But Chicago so much depends on your knowing what it was. The visitor who sees it for the first time is still likely to pass an adverse judgement upon it—especially if he wanders in its streets at

random. There is dirt and a humanity that looks like dirt, there is appalling carelessness and lack of joy in life, rust and refuse uncounted—but that is not all. Chicago is a city rising to strong self-consciousness, a city getting under control and improving steadily. It is no longer the city which Stead saw when he wrote *If Christ came to Chicago*, nor is it the city described in Upton Sinclair's *Jungle*. It is many streets better. It has gone several blocks West. In Chicago people now talk of the "City Beautiful."

Chicago has been the anvil of fortune, and that merely,—the smithy, the works, the place to which men went to make money, to lift themselves from a life of rough primitive toil to a life of clean clothes and ease. There they employed whom they could to help them, and incidentally helped their helpers often. It is true they exploited the foreign immigrant and that they did not help him much—because he was largely helpless. And they attracted great numbers of Negroes and exploited them and did not help them much. They left the immigrant and the coloured man to live round about their factories amid waste ends of material. And when that labour itself wore out, it lay around also as waste-ends—waste-ends of humanity. Hence the vast aggregation of dirt and poverty in the city.

But the point of view has changed. The people of business are so rich that America has become intolerant of poverty. Like the Prince of Monaco, she is determined to abolish the poor. She will not admit new poor into her country,

and those she has she is raising out of the slough. Everything and every one is being cleaned up. Chicago is to become all middle-class, and during the ten years since I saw it first it has made enormous strides in that direction.

Michigan Avenue and the Magnolia Walk, the long park-like water-front, were very gratifying to our eyes after the clamour and bang of State Street and Dearborn, where there are still many at the anvil of fortune. "In a hundred years," I hazarded, "the whole city may have become a park."

Kansas City, at which we stopped next, is of course far less problematical in aspect than Chicago. It is smaller. It grew up in a more prosperous era. It took advantage of all the new fixtures and technical appliances of a later stage. It is therefore cleaner and not so much littered with discarded material. The stockyards and tanning factories, however, charge the air heavily upon occasion with an odour which should surely be intolerable. No one could live for pleasure in a city of infected air. It must, therefore, be a city of business, money-making, and that only, for most people. Yet it is a fine city on the high bank of the Kansas River, overlooking rich farmlands. It is the fringe of the West, and cowboys with their broad hats and sunburnt faces are not infrequent on its crowded streets. There is an air of expectancy, as if the gates of industrialism and bondage stood open and the American nation was free to pour out on to the prairies and the wild places of the Rockies.

It much astonished Ewart that whilst passing through the States of Kansas and Iowa we could not buy cigarettes. The Kansans did not smoke, and it appeared no one wanted to. Cigarette-smoking was regarded as a vice and a shame.

"Betting has also been abolished, and so has immorality," observed a Kansan with a smile.

"Free speech also," said I. And I had him there, for America was still excited by the arrest of William Allen White at Emporia, Kansas, for saying he was partly in favour of a railroad strike.

Intolerance cuts into vice, but sometimes takes a slice of virtue too, even in Kansas. I believe, however, that the Kansan is nearest to being an average normal American. He is the representative American.

South of Kansas the people are mostly Southerners; west of it they are certainly Western; north of it and east of it they are certainly Middle West. But Kansas itself is a New England seed in Middle Western soil.

"You are the people who have taken away our wine," say Easterners reproachfully.

The Kansans smile.

"We are the people," they say, and are not at all ashamed.

Ewart and I travelled across Kansas and its many farms, and the vague thought of Quivira crossed my mind. This was the country in which Coronado and his followers in 1541 gave up their quest of gold, being brought to Wichita by an Indian who wished to lead them to their doom. In this country, the Indian said, lay the Kingdom

of Quivira, where the king and his princes wore golden armour. And he brought them to a camp of nomads near the great bend of the Arkansas River, and there was nought there but the invisible possibility of what is now Kansas. The enraged Spaniards, therefore, strangled the Indian and turned their faces southward once more toward Cibola and the deserts in New Spain.

But golden Quivira is golden to-day, golden with corn, and Kansas is the richest State in the Union; a State literally without poor, a State with empty prisons, without doss-houses, without outdoor relief. Kansas of to-day wears golden armour against Fate and has proved the Indian to be right.

“Ho for Kansas, land that restores us!” as Lindsay cried. And then, farewell. The train on its iron tracks rolls onward, following its predecessor, followed inevitably by its successor, sootily, dustily, heavily, to the steeps of Colorado; out of the green country up to the grey and bare, up to the hills and broken cliffs, to the pasture lands and the cowboys. The pipe-smokers of Colorado fill the black-leather section of the ordinary cars, the smoking section; in come horse-faced men who have lived with horses so much that their features have caught a reflection of horses’ features, men with sun-dried complexions and bodies; not so witty as the people of the East, more humorous though, and full of a new kind of talk. All the linen collars have gone, and with them the comparative stiffness of business life. Not that there are not collars on the train. God

forbid! There are Pullman cars lagging on to us somewhere, and respectability sitting perched on plush, as everywhere else. But in the smoking section of the ordinary car is the real life of the country.

Ewart would have liked to dismount at Trinidad, Colorado, and at Dodge City, but our tickets were nearly out of date. So we let ourselves be hoisted on to the New Mexican plateau with its wide stretches of sand dotted with dwarf pines, with its dried-up river-channels, its mud-heads of mountains and strange bluffs, its Mexicans and Indians. Next day we were at Santa Fe.



## IV. RIDE TO THE JEMEZ<sup>1</sup> INDIANS

### I.

ONE of the poets at Santa Fe had decided to return East and finish a university course which he had broken by a year of freedom and poetry in New Mexico. So Wilfrid Ewart bought his horse, an Indian pony, white, small-footed, and wiry, and named as it were facetiously, "George." He proved too short for a man of six feet two, but except at starting, when he sometimes refused to budge for five minutes, he went as well as the other two horses, Billy and Buck. He proved to be branded with the mark of the Santo Domingo Indians, and there were many horses of his size and gait in their pueblo. Every time we met any of the Indians, however, they would ask suspiciously, "Where you get that horse?" George gave us some amusement, for he jumped sideways with all four feet at once when a car passed him, and though slow by habit he would upon occasion jump to an impulse that he was in a race with my impetuous Billy. The mile home from the post-office we would sometimes find ourselves in a wild gallop, chased for moments

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced *Hemez*, the Spanish "j" being an aspirate.

by starved dogs who drove Billy to additional excitement.

We had a pleasant autumn at Santa Fe, pierced though it was by shafts of winter cold. The sun heat was great, but there was frost every night. Ewart had brought literary work, and he sat with his papers in a profuse sun-bath; he became deeply sunburned, and the skin peeled from the back of his writing hand. But it was good for him. Arriving in indifferent health, it was remarkable how he improved.

It was unfortunate that winter came so rapidly. Though so far south we began to have weather much colder than that of New York, and the snow from the mountain summits crept lower. Snow swept down from the heights, driven by the wind into our valleys. There were several October days when the whole desert was clad in unnatural white. Then the sun came out and, like magic, uncovered the desert again, and the thirsty sand drank up what dissolved, and soon all was as before.

In a pleasant interlude between snowstorms in early November we set off for the Jemez Dance, the annual trading-fair and *festa* of November 12. My wife and I were on Buckskin and Billy. As we took no pack-horse along with us, we had all our impedimenta strapped on to our saddles. We had been told we should find no water or provisions on the way, and so we carried more than we needed to have done. Ewart had four pounds of ham tied to the pommel of his saddle, as well as a waterproof

and toilet-case, and his saddle pockets behind him were stuffed.

I carried bags before and behind. And Buck also was much encumbered, though his rider was so much lighter. Buck made a bad start by falling into the *Acequia Madre*, the irrigation ditch, with fore feet in front of a wretched rustic bridge and hind legs hanging in air. In this posture I had to undo his girths and liberate him from his packs ere we could get him on to his feet. He started, therefore, in a melancholy and cautious mood, and we walked him a good deal of the way. Indeed, in the evening, convinced that he was suffering from sprain, I persuaded Mrs. Graham to ride Billy whilst I led Buck by the reins. In this way we reached La Cienega and put up at a Mexican farm where we were very happily regaled, though we had to go to bed at eight o'clock and all slept in the same room. Next morning Buckskin showed that he had no sprain. I had led the horses to water and had returned to set our coffee-pot on the Mexicans' kitchen fire, and I had left them barely ten minutes when the farmer's wife came in and said two of the horses had got out of the enclosure. They were Billy and Buck. Lightly clad as I was, I threw my saddle on George and bridled him and went off at once. For I knew that the two miscreants would make for home at a good pace. George proved his worth that morning. Chasing other horses was what he was made for. He went like the wind after these others. In a mile we got them in view; they were trotting

steadily together; in a mile and a half they stopped and turned to consider us, and Buck stopped the hesitation by breaking into a hearty canter, joined by Billy. But we overhauled them, and George, without any guidance from me, turned them both. If only I had been a cowboy and could have handled the rope which I held in my hand! Alas, I missed the chance, and all three horses settled down for a cross-country gallop. I reflected that we should thus gallop up the main street of Santa Fe and up the Canyon Road and into our familiar yard at noon. It was a perplexing thought. I slowed down George therefore, and noticed that Billy and Buck did the same. I hastened again, they hastened; slowed, they slowed. But at five miles from La Cienega my second opportunity came, and I took it. A deep *arroyo* was spanned by a bridge. It could be reached across country without my appearing to pursue the horses. At the bridge I dismounted and idled and appeared to be interested in the view whilst the two runaways approached. Both suddenly stopped and stared. Billy raised his head very high and kicked out friskily with his hind legs. Buck made a wily detour. But I showed not the least interest, so they began to graze here and there where a tuft of grass appeared. I thereupon made a cup of my hand as if it held corn, and approached Billy, calling him, keeping the hand out of the view of the inquisitive, greedy, but very crafty Buckskin. Billy, however, intoxicated by freedom and the morning air, cut a wild cantrip and fled. But Buck really

thought I had corn, and when I approached him I got near enough to put a rope over his neck. Secured and tied to the bridge, he looked a repentant horse. It took another ten minutes to capture Billy, then I changed the saddle on to his back and started all three back to Cienega at a smart trot. Then of course I could reflect how pleasant an adventure it was, the best two hours of the day. It was a pity, however, that the horses should lose their freshness before the real riding of the morning commenced.

We all set off at once for *Penya Blanca*, on the *Rio Grande*. We had hoped to ford the river that day, but now it proved to be too far. Yet it was a very pleasant day's riding, following over sand and boulders and running water the scores of zigzags of stream which threaded a profound ravine. All was grey. Tumultuous piles of rock stared down at us as we clattered along—the horses lapped at the water and made deep hoof-marks in the wet sand. There were no birds, no flowers, no evergreens—no life but that of ourselves and the sunlight on the grey pebbles. Even the fire which we made of water-washed wood burned with invisible flames, and the steam did not show till the water raised the lid of our coffee-pot and boiled over. We sat together in the early afternoon, quaffed coffee, and ate down our weight of provisions. We had even got hay for our horses at a farm-house, and we eased their girths and fed them a little and watered them ere we resumed our way.

We reached *Penya Blanca* at night, led o'er

the moor by tiny distant lights. We were nearly led away to the Indian village of Cochiti, as its lights on the other side of the river flickered and beckoned in the darkness. But after traversing a mile of deep sand we turned our horses and made for other brighter lights which had come into view on our left. Penya Blanca is a squatters' village, extensive and substantial, though none of the settlers there have adequate legal title to the land they hold as theirs. Their forefathers came there to obtain the protection of the Cochiti Indians from the raiding Navajos, and they stopped there and took to themselves a large fertile slice of the lands of the Indians.

It was not too easy to obtain shelter for the night; but Ewart was taken in at a house where there was to be a wedding next day, and nobody there except he slept a wink all night long. He had hot coffee and a substantial breakfast before dawn. We were not so lucky, but we had a mattress and a floor in a room of an empty house. The horses fared best of all, being put into a cosy corral with heaps of alfalfa and corn and a grand disarray of corn-husks. Next morning we had them saddled at dawn, and we rode to the fording of the river as sunrise was breaking over the mountains.

That day was a glorious one; first through the brown-leaved woods of the river shore, then up over sandbanks and crags, through copse and bosage, ever higher, to wild rocky country and vast wastes where no man lived and no cattle of any kind found pasture. The morning sun was

overswept by snow-clouds, the winds hurried over mountain-sides in white capes of hurrying snow. Snow blew lustily into our faces and over our horses. We rode into fast-dropping curtains of thick snow and rode through them and out of them into radiant sunlight again. There joined us on the way many Indians clad in cotton shirts and breeches and with old scarlet and orange blankets swathed about their shoulders like capes. Their polished ebony hair hung in long rough-tied plaits from their lightly turbaned heads. I say turbaned, but the turban was no more than a gaily coloured kerchief tied like a bandage around their temples.

"How!" "How!" they cried in little yelps as they drew abreast of us.

"Hello," we replied. "Going to Jemez Dance?"

"Si, si," they answered. "You going?"

Few spoke any English, but they were delighted to have us of their company, and we went with various parties for many miles. Once there were more than twelve of us all cantering together over the vague trail, and it was a pretty sight.

"Poco frio—a little cold," was a favourite remark of ours.

"Si, much frio," they replied. "Not a little but *very* cold!"

They stopped and lit five-minute bonfires of dried weeds, just to warm their hands and bodies. Round these blazes they fairly danced. In the twilight of the late afternoon among the snow

patches, these bonfire dances were most eerie in appearance.

The Indians were so cold they made their horses go faster and faster to keep warm. But as ours were more heavily burdened we kept a more moderate pace and let the Indians go ahead. We made a big pot of coffee in the afternoon, and that kept warm our toes otherwise chilled in the stirrups. The Indians, on in front, had been eating melons and throwing down chunks of rind. In these rinds which we fed from our hands, and in mouthfuls of snow, Billy and Buck took enormous pleasure, simply guzzling over it. George, however, seemed to have toothache and turned his head away.

One of the Indians helped us greatly when we rode on. He was from San Felipe, and named Lorenzo. He turned out of the party he belonged to and watched us lest we should go astray. Possibly he saved us from a night wandering in the mountains. For when we had taken a wrong trail and gone some way upon it, our attention was arrested by long persistent cries which we felt had reference to us. And looking about, we saw the silhouette of Lorenzo on the top of a little mountain, and saw that he was signalling us to come toward him.

This we did, and we found we had been going on a dangerous precipitous trail which in truth led no whither except to goat pastures and hideous abysses. Lorenzo went with us the rest of the way, and we descended into the Jemez valley by a track none but Mexican ponies would



follow; down narrow gullies, along broken ledges, down sharp slides and drops. The whole countryside dropped in tumultuous crags and steep, shale slopes, cliffs, precipices—to the Jemez River. The last light of evening gleamed on us, and we left our fate to Lorenzo and the horses to do with it what they would—an adventurous and as it seemed a perilous ride.

At nightfall, as the village church was ringing for vespers, we rode into the crowded pueblo and were four out of many who had come to the great dance and *fiesta*.

## II.

The Jemez Dance used to be one of the finest and most elaborate of the Indian dances, and the tribe, living more remotely, had kept itself more fresh and vivid and unspoiled than for instance the Tesuque Indians, the pets of the artists, who dance on the same day. But the growth of the great city of Albuquerque and the development of the high road to Jemez Springs have attracted the gaze of the white man in all its vulgar curiosity and ignorance. I do not speak of artists and poets, who are as reverent at a dance as the most pious at Mass, but of those who think of life as a coloured supplement to a Sunday paper, a Chaplinade, a burlesque, something over which to be facetious.

“There’s a bunch of dudes coming over from a dude ranch,” said a cowboy, referring to a touring party from a fashionable resort.

"A speculator come here las' week from Albuquerque and booked up every spare room in the pueblo," said another. "But the road's nigh blocked with snow. Guess we shan't see any Albuquerque folk this year. Too much scared of being stranded. Once a party got snowed up here for a week."

"There's a man here I'd like to insult," said Ewart, with a laugh. "He is Babbitt himself. I'd like to go up to him and say, '*Mr. Babbitt, I believe,*' with a courtly bow."

Babbitt was certainly there with his wife and Kodak and furs and waiting automobile, but he was not duplicated. He stood out in relief against all the rest. For all the lesser Babbitts had been scared by the snow.

November the 12th, Spanish festival of St. Iago, festival of the war-cry by which the country was conquered, *Sant Iago a ellos: up and at them, St. James!* was the great day at Jemez. It was a bleak Sunday morning and the stark jagged hills, pedestals of rock, standing places which encompass the dark village, were lit by radii of a flashing sunrise. Silhouetted up there stood solitary Indians, watching religiously, and they remained till night had fled and the living sanguine of the mountains was revealed. Down below, in the streets of the pueblo, you would think there were a hundred wild horses. For the visiting Indians, unable to find stabling, had turned their horses loose, and they ran about like dogs, hunting for provender, whinnying to one another, biting one another, kicking, scampering from yard to

yard. Our three horses were set upon by droves, which I sought to keep off whilst they ate.

Usually in the morning the Jemez Indians dance a horse dance—very fitting in such a place of horses; one Indian is made up as a horse, and he is accompanied by a drummer with a soot-coloured face and a naked mirth-maker. And these parade the mud-built town. But this year that dance was omitted.

Instead the traders and the Navajos chattered over the price of blankets. Snowflakes fell indolently on to the grey streets, on to the horses' backs, on to the many black hogs, on to the quaint mud domes of the bread ovens, the *estufas*, in front of the houses, but it settled most of all on the gorgeous hand-woven blankets of the Navajos. Every year hundreds of Navajos ride in from their country, which lies between the Jemez River and the Grand Canyon, and bring a year's product in woven blankets, and there come to meet them here many Indians from Santo Domingo. For the Domingo Indians mine turquoise and are clever craftsmen in silver. The Navajos want silver and turquoise ornaments; the Domingans want blankets. So a great barter takes place. Besides these, the white trader comes and buys in dozens and makes many profitable deals.

"Don't tell anybody," said Mrs. Babbitt. "I've brought these parrot feathers. Don't you think I might get a bracelet with them?"

And she did.

Meanwhile from a squatters' village came a

meagre crowd of Mexicans in black, and filled the seats of the little Indian church, and gave to the *fiesta* the appearance of a Christian festival. A priest also appeared and a Roman Mass was sung. A group of Mexican youths with guns waited to fire a volley in air at the elevation of the Host—but they were discouraged and took to random firing instead.

“I think we’d better give these fellows a wide berth,” said Ewart, as he watched the way they were fooling with their rifles.

They were neither pious nor careful, for they continued taking shots at sparrows and crows whilst the figures of St. Iago and the emblems of the Church were carried past them in procession.

Curiously irrelevant seemed the diminutive black-dressed procession, following a white-surpliced priest, a man with a lantern, a man with a Cross, and two men with figures of the Saint—a Mexican carrying a modern machine-made St. James, an Indian carrying the original Indian-made image of wood. The Navajos, all between six and seven feet tall, swathed from head to ankles in voluminous bright-coloured blankets, looked exceedingly morosely at the spectacle, only their dark cavernous eyes staring from faces which they covered even to their noses with the flaps of their blankets. The wind blew, the dust rose, the snow came slanting down, and the black-robed Mexicans turned their faces away as they trudged. The Cross and the flickering lantern wavered in air as they went.

There met them, accidentally, the heralds of

the dance, the ugliest and squattest of the Jemez Indians, their faces blackened out with soot, and bearing in their hands tiny home-made drums, which they beat with a will. The tom-tom was beaten by two of them, and a third, with widely dilated eyes and old, strained, carved-out face and flying hair, sang in pagan voice—*Hoi hoi ho-ho, ha-ha-ha-ha*. The Church went one way; they went another, without a salute, as if one were invisible to the other.

At noon the Presbyterian missionary made his annual visit, and together with the Agent and the District Nurse and the aid of a harmonium struck up "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." The Indians had marched out in their beauty; no ugliness now, no devil-frightening, but a serene picture of physical loveliness. The *Koshare*, the spirits of ancestors, mirth-makers, leaders of the dance had been prohibited this year, their nakedness having been considered unseemly by the white onlookers. But the youth of the village was nearly naked, and nothing short of glory to their Creator.

The dance was like wind in the corn or fast-travelling shadows on the hills; it was like the dimpling of the waves where many waters meet together; it was like the arching of the necks, the waving of the manes of many horses on the prairie; it was like the trembling of morning light upon the mountains and the sea. The snowflakes emulated it but did not succeed. And all who watched seemed turned to stone, to perfect immobility, by the perfection of the move-

ment that they saw. The hundreds of tall Navajos were like statues, and those on the roofs looking down on the wide brown sandy open place of the dance—there were many on the roofs—looked like figures that had survived centuries and looked on unmoved hundreds of times, hundreds of years. They were completely and sharply silhouetted against the mountains and the sky.

The Jemez men were painted a dark yellow, and wore white moccasins threaded with silver bells. In their hands they carried gourds with peas in them, which they rattled. 'Twixt their bare arms and an armlet they carried slips of green pine. They were crowned with leaves and feathers, they had turquoise necklaces on their smooth round necks. And their long coal-black hair hung on their backs to the mount of their hips. The bare-footed women wore green *tablitas*, like crowns, on their heads, and coloured *fajas* about their waists. They had bracelets and rings, they held green branches in their hands. Their dance was a tremble, a departure from calm; the men's dance between them a prolonged ecstasy, a descending out of eternal movement into calm.

They surged up the village street, ever forward, ever more of them, more strung-out, more beautiful—accompanying at the side were dramatic groups in everyday attire, chanting, exhorting the unseen powers, roaring together fantastic choruses of semi-musical gibberish. And the drums beat inexorably, as if they were the

voice of the gods, the control whom no one at any time had ever disobeyed.

You are changed to stone, yes, to the stone of the Stone Age. Babbitt has gone; there is only this that you see. Ah, no—for somewhere a church bell has been set a-ringing and a harmonium is playing a hymn; yes, there it is, in much rebellion and complaint, "Nearer, my God, to Thee"! Mr. Babbitt nonchalantly strides in among the dancers and distributes cigarettes, which the dancers, being nearly naked, cannot put away. He will not be denied. He photographs the scene. He has a knowing look. The Indian Governor is angered, but what can he do? There is nothing the white man understands except force; neither manners, nor reason, nor what is sacred. So the will of the white man will prevail. The beautiful dancing will cease.

"I give it ten years," said the Forestry Agent of the Government. "By that time they will all be citizens. It will be a Presbyterian village."

"Just like a village in the Highlands of Scotland," I hazarded.

The Agent smiled. For he was a Highlander by extraction. The Scot, though sentimental at home about "the snowflake that softly reposes" on his native hills, about the heather, the kilt, the bagpipe, and the rest, is often the most unsentimental and prosaic fellow when in the presence of another nation's romance.

However, the Presbyterians have it not all their own way in Jemez. The Catholics claim it as their ground, sanctified by the blood of Fran-

ciscan martyrs. They are educating the children, and making them, therefore, extremely naughty and ill-behaved during the dance. For they are taught to despise paganism. The pranks played by the children on their dancing fathers and mothers I should prefer not to mention in describing the beautiful dance. Yet it was there and was a sign of the times.

### III.

The night after the dance there was a fight between the Navajos and the Apaches, two or three score of the latter having ridden in and begun strutting through the pueblo with their orange-coloured scarves and big feathers in their dark sombreros. They and the Navajos were the fiercest of the Indians, and used to ravage the whole country, even down as far as Chihuahua in Old Mexico. And they are still warlike people, ready to start strife on a slight pretext. The Navajos are especially untamable.

The horses also this night got into trouble, their exasperation and hunger seeming to possess them. Juan Louis Pecos, the Indian who had charge of our three steeds, did the best he could, but that was not much. George and Buck were tied to a post. Billy had been put in hobbles and turned loose. But the Indian horses constantly invaded the yard of the house where we were staying, and the unhobbled ones drove Billy away from his feed. Juan, having taken part in the dance, was very late in bringing the alfalfa,



and when he brought it it proved to be of a very thorny nature, reaped with abundant weeds from Indian fields. Just after nine at night we had an exciting half-hour.

Billy, having been dispossessed, vented his rage on George, whom in any case he regarded as an interloper, and he drove him round and round the post to which he was tied until the rope was wound tight. The little white pony looked as if he were going to strangle himself, and he was in a violent excitement, kicking out with his hind legs and straining with all his neck muscles. Buck, tied near him, craftily avoided all entanglements. But Billy, hobbled as he was, could not be restrained. Ewart untied Buck and he scampered off, and I cut George's rope, sawing it for several seconds, for it was a very stout fine line of an unbreakable kind. George meanwhile let out at all and sundry, and when cut loose dashed away with Billy after him.

Mrs. Graham happily recaptured Buckskin at the drinking-trough—fortunately he had not grasped the geography of the large ramshackle yard, else he would no doubt forthwith have set off for home. Ewart and I chased the other two horses to the accompaniment of the clangour of Billy's chain-hobbles. They got into the main street of the pueblo, and Billy made such a pace, even hobbled, that we could not overtake them; he leapt like a hobby-horse, he trotted in short rapid steps, and he certainly made the white pony go. George, however, doubled on us, and Billy doubled across our tracks also. We cried to Apaches and

Navajos to aid us, but they looked on gloomily from their blankets. Dogs rushed about and barked and gave chase, and we, with electric torches in our hands, strove to see the horses we were after. Billy was audible by the sound of his hobbles. But suddenly, to my horror, I saw his big shadowy body leap in air and heard a sickening thud. He seemed to have gone neck over crop. I could not surmise what had happened to him. There was, however, a chance to run down George in a corner of a waste field, and I ran to assist Ewart. George was recaptured. Then with torches we sought the form of Billy. He made not a sound now, and might be dead.

I found him at last, lying stretched out as if he had breathed his last. But he was far from dead. Seeing me, he made a great effort to get up, but fell back helpless. Then I saw what had happened. He had caught the shoe of one of his hind legs in the chain which held his two fore legs, and a link was firmly embedded between the iron and the hoof. No horse can stand with three legs tied. I felt much relieved, petted him, and then, with a big stone in one hand and the electric light and his hind leg in the other, I started the awkward job of knocking the bit of chain out of his hoof. Ewart held George and shed his light also on the scene. Indians came and peered at us out of the darkness, and the hubbub of dogs barking continued all over the village.

Billy was freed without further accident, and the three horses were tied up in separate places,

and in a repentant mood they stood and watched till morning. They looked very miserable at dawn. For they had had no corn, and the other horses had stolen their hay, and they had had a series of frights in the night. I went up a ladder with an old Indian on to the top of his roof, and we filled a sack with ripe corn-cobs—some yellow, some scarlet, some almost blue, and we fed the horses personally, each of us his own, and that was a great comfort. Then we saddled up and rode on to the trading post of San Ysidro.

Here an enormous trade was being done by white traders buying up all manner of Indian wares and selling store goods in exchange. We took refuge in Miller's Trading Store, and put our horses in charge of "Velvet Joe," who led them to happy quarters. Buck rolled on his back for a long time, and then sat on the soft ground and looked around him like a contented dromedary. Velvet Joe came and told us the horse was ill. But he did not understand the joy of the escape from that exasperating pueblo and its wild horses. Billy and George, having contemplated Buckskin for a while, followed his example and took a good roll also.

Next day we rode to Zia, on sand-dunes over the Jemez River, in a fullness of sunshine. In the evening we made the pueblo of Santa Ana, and slept in an Indian house, all on the floor of a mud-built room. An ex-governor was our host, a very gentle and indeed beautiful Indian. At dawn the day following we climbed the dark table mountain, having to lead our horses and

coax them to mount the steep slopes of volcanic scoriae and boulders. Looking backward, we saw Santa Ana removed to obscurity and littleness far away on the yellow evenness of the river shore. We with our horses were exalted on black and dreadful cliffs. Cold winds sprang at us from the ravines. Persistent winds blew against us and athwart us. We achieved nevertheless the summit—and the summit was a new country, a wide grassy plateau miles across, but without view except of cloud and sky. Perhaps we were lucky, but we rode on to the faint sheep-trail to San Felipe and came at last, after an hour or two's riding, to a plunging rocky stairway leading downward, a nose-dive down to the Rio Grande River, and there, like a Moorish city, lay the beautiful yellow pueblo of San Felipe. The horses did not object to the steep descent; all three in single file we descended slowly and processionally, down to the village of our friend Lorenzo. And the first Indian we met there was he.

Lorenzo took us where we could get food, and happily put us on the way for Santo Domingo, which at nightfall we reached. We still rode on to the Mexican Stores, an inn two or three miles nearer Santa Fe, and there, feeling pretty tired, we did justice to a hot supper of ham and eggs and coffee and potatoes and other good things.

The next day was the last day of our ride, and we experienced a violent snowstorm, climbing La Bajada Hill in an up-flutter of snowflakes, and finding the moor above it deep in snow. A pitiless east wind drove a blizzard against us,

caking our right-hand sides with ice and snow. The horses grew all white; "domes of silence" raised their hoofs, additional snow-boots fixed on their hoofs. They stumbled repeatedly. Twenty miles in a raging blizzard was an ordeal for them as much as for us, but they knew they were nearing home and comfortable happy quarters. "There's no place like home" was written on the knowing features of Buck. And Billy, who was none the worse for his adventure with his hobbles, encouraged Buck onward as it seemed.

That night, when we had all changed our clothes and the horses were fed and housed, and we sat and watched three-foot logs flaming from a broad hearth, we felt we had had an adventure—we had gone far, we had seen new life, we had lived intimately with our horses for a week, and it had been greatly worth while.

Cigarette smoke rose from our chairs in meditative rings.

## V. AT CIBOLA

AT the end of November I went to Cibola, which had been the goal, four hundred years ago, of Coronado and his companions. I had hoped to ride over the ground of Cortes's conquest of Mexico first and then follow the adventures of Coronado and his companions, who followed the golden vision of Cibola northward. Thus I should have kept to the historical sequence—Columbus and the Indies, 1492; Balboa and the Pacific, 1513; Cortes and Montezuma, 1521; Coronado, 1541. But life and death break up elaborate plans. Since Wilfrid Ewart had joined us in New Mexico, we decided to follow Coronado first and seek, as he did, the far-famed Seven Cities. We read the quaint Spanish narrative of Coronado's journey and we set off, and it was at the time of the wonderful Shaleco Dance.

A coloured gentleman in 1540 was greatly responsible for the legend of the Seven Cities, though he paid for it with his life. But it may be that the Friars Marcos of Nice and Antonio of Santa Maria, who accompanied him, were more credulous. The black man is generally known as Stephen the Moor. All set off together, but the friars, not liking the smell of their companion's

skin, bade him go ahead and they would follow at a convenient distance. Stephen the Moor was not loth, and being of an adventurous spirit he improved his opportunity, made love to Indian girls as he went along, and filled his bags with their turquoises.

The friars lagged behind and spent so much time in prayer and meditation that Stephen the Moor got to be two hundred and forty miles ahead of them. When he arrived at Cibola they were only at Chichilticalli.

The Indians of Cibola would not believe the blackamoor when he said he represented a white race and had a great white emperor. His complexion belied it. The Indians concluded it would be safer to kill him. They had never seen a black man before and were much perplexed. They did not believe Stephen the Moor's story; perhaps they could not understand it. But they evidently thought it would be safer to kill him than to let him go back to his tribe. So Stephen the Moor was choked, and the first discoverer of Cibola perished; his harem and the bags of turquoise were scattered. When the friars, toiling through the desert, heard of it they were stricken with fear and gave away to the news-bearers all that they had—except their vestments. They turned about precipitately and fled incontinently back to Court, bringing the tale of a mighty race of Indians and another Montezuma, of riches incredible and a sway mightier than the empire of the Aztecs. Strangely enough, the friars believed their own story.

Straightway an expedition was fitted out, of braggadocios and gallants, of noble desperadoes and desperate nobles—in short, of the best blood in all New Spain. Coronado took the head, and would not Coronado outdo the deeds of the great Cortes himself? The almost fabulous wealth and splendour of Mexico had prepared the naturally credulous minds of the Spaniards for even the most fantastic things. So it did not prove difficult to man and equip an army to conquer Cibola. The vanguard was all of “heroes,” the rear was an ever-swelling army of camp-followers.

They rode five hundred leagues; the honoured friars, no longer timid, accompanying. Their plump horses grew thin and weak, and the riders walked beside them and shouldered their own empty treasure-sacks, hoping ever to feed and fill in the rich country beyond. But every day was one of cactus and wild dusty waste. The hands of the prickly pears were dusty—water was the rarest thing in the earth. But what did it matter? The rich rare Cibola was near.

Scores of times were the friars called upon to retell their story. And they abated no jot of the splendours. They sustained the courage of the army to cross one of the most dreadful wildernesses in the New World. And the Spaniards thought themselves well on the way to India or the fabulous approaches to Tibet and Turkestan.

When one reflects that this adventurous army, like that of Cortes, asked nothing else but *gold*, real fortune, one can understand the extent of their disillusion and chagrin. From a historical



and geographical view it was a most valuable and interesting expedition. But what did that matter to them? When they found Cibola and realised that it had no treasure they journeyed another thousand miles in quest of the even more fantastic "Kingdom of Quivira," and people of a weaker race than Spaniards would have vanished away and disappeared in the deserts, like the streams of the Rockies.

There was a Cibola, there is a Cibola, and Cibola will be. It is one of the most undisturbed spots in the world. The Zunyi Indians, who inhabited the Seven Cities and who still live among the ruins of them, hold a remarkable belief. They are geo-planarians, and have always considered the earth to be flat, and that at the extremities there is a danger of falling off. Our London, New York, Tokio, San Francisco, Cape Town, Melbourne, and the rest they would reckon highly dangerous—and quite truly. Ages ago, it is said, the guardian Spirit led the Zunyi tribe to the safest spot, that is, to the very centre of the earth, the point farthest away from the edge. The sacred rock, Hepatinah, in the Zunyi land, to-day as then, marks the centre. There were a few thousand Indians in those cities when the Spaniards came and there are a few thousand still. They live in houses of dried mud and of quarried stone—they are heavily and beautifully adorned with turquoise and silver. They are gentle and mild in character but very firm of will, people of changeless purpose, and they have successfully withstood soldiers, missionaries, pioneers, com-

mercial travellers, and tourists for four hundred years. They are worshippers of Nature gods and have a religion which is all playfulness, dance, and drama, very beautiful in its expression and evidently more real to them than the faith of the missionaries.

I set out for Cibola ahead; Wilfrid Ewart went later by car. I got a horse at the Penitente village of San Rafael in New Mexico. Nearly all the inhabitants there practise self-flagellation in Lent and are Spanish-speaking. Not that their forefathers were followers of Coronado. The upper Rio Grande country was settled only at a much later date, and then very sparsely and by people whose Catholicism was not entirely orthodox. The Penitentes are a "peculiar people," said by some to be an attempt to realise the Third Order of St. Francis, and quite possibly having their *causa prima* in the zeal of the Franciscans. Be that as it may, San Rafael is a widespread, untidy, and inhospitable settlement on a plain covered otherwise with innumerable volcanic cinders. The cactus alone of all the vegetable world seems at home among the gnarled and crusted and broken rocks and the blue-black cakes and slabs of volcanic asphalt. There are lines of tumbledown adobe houses down below, and three moradas or Penitente chapels on the hills above.

Among the inhabitants is a Jewish store-keeper, Solomon Bibo, once Governor of the Indian pueblo of Acoma, near by, and lord of the "Enchanted Mesa." "Mesa," by the way, is

our old friend "mensa," a table, with the "n" left out, and means in Spanish a table-land. As the main characteristic of the country is the dark, sharp-edged table-land, we may have frequently to refer to "mesas."

As a young man, Solomon Bibo came into these parts and sold things by the wayside, sold them to the Indians, started a trading-post, married an Indian girl, won his way to the hearts and councils of the Acoma Indians, who, by the way, four hundred years before, from the height of their *mesa*, fiercely withstood Coronado. And Solomon, who must have learned their language, and danced their dances, entered the tribe and was elected Governor.

That partly answers the question why Jews are not seen to go to Aberdeen. Why should they, when they can go to Acoma and become, as it were, princes?

However, Sol Bibo had had his day at the pueblo and was now leading store-keeper in San Rafael among these less congenial, though not less profitable, Penitente Spaniards.

Epiphany brought me my horse and we set off. To Cibola from San Rafael is somewhat over eighty miles, through the Zuni Mountains and the Mormon village of Ramah, getting on to what used to be a great but desolate highway in Spanish times from the south to the north.

The trail climbed upward from the warmer lower levels of the lava beds and wound into the mazes of great rock debris, up to banks of unmelted snow and long snow-trails where spruce

and piñon blurted from the rocks. We reached wide untrammelled fields of snow and entered a snowstorm which enveloped us in white veils. Epiphany took a blanket from under his horse and tied it about his shoulders, and I put on my gloves and turned up my collar. We cantered the horses through the snow, even galloped. For the snow made the Spaniard uneasy, and he urged speed. His horse, Diamond, did not look like a diamond, but his master believed in him. And though he plunged and stumbled and got into holes, Epiphany merely swore at him, pulled him up, and urged him on the faster.

When the snowstorm lifted, Epiphany seemed to be more at ease, but he had broken one of his stirrups and that forced him to a steady trot. We rode across to a deserted cabin, and he sought some wire to mend the stirrup whilst I opened a can of tongue and cut up a rough lunch. Epiphany then admitted he had never been to Ramah before in his life, though he had heard that it was Mormon and you could have more than one wife. This tickled his mind a good deal and he said, "I'll write to my girl when we get there to come and be my first wife." And while he spoke he arduously wound alfalfa wire about the wooden foot-cage of his stirrup.

"We must go much faster now," he cried. For the Mexican who is so slow over everything else is very impatient on horseback. Epiphany cantered uphill and downhill and over stones and holes in a mad style, not merely for a hundred yards or so, but over leagues.

We emerged on to a magnificent snow-covered plateau and plunged gaily across it, not guessing that there were twenty miles of it and more, and it was not to be conquered in an hour. Over all the white prairie the tops of withered stems poked through the snow, and you knew the trail by the absence of the stems and a shadow, a vague indentation. Rosy mesas called to the woods and to us from a far horizon, and slowly as we rode there came into view what looked like a great white castle or cathedral, fully ten miles away, but glittering in late sunlight. I felt I could not be mistaken; this must be the famous "Mesa Escrita," or Inscription Rock, as the Americans call it, whereon Spanish explorers and travellers have written their names even from the time of Onate.

As it stands hard by the road to Ramah we made for it, and rode for nearly two hours toward it before it seemed to grow near us. But by then the snow-clouds had returned. Eager airs swept the plateau with earfuls of snow and wisps of blown drift. Evening dusk was closing rapidly in, and it looked as if we should be out in the storm all night, when we espied a Mexican rancher coming towards us on his horse. This was Caromillo, returning from Ramah to his cabin with a sack of flour, and he advised us to spend the night with him.

So we rode back to the tiny adobe hut, the door of which was bolted from within. And the little old man let himself in at a window and then undid the bolt. It was like an ice-house inside, but we readily unsaddled our horses and led them into

the "corral," and then lit a fire in the hut and put on pots to boil. It rapidly grew hot, and we stretched ourselves on the clay floor, drank coffee, munched bread and cheese, and fried salmon from a tin.

Night had come down outside and hid the great rock which we were so near, and when I went out to look at the horses a three-ways blowing snow tempest made whirls of snow dust in the air. Curiously enough, the moon was shining behind the storm and lit up the snow-swept little cabin and barn with a dim turnip-lantern light.

There was not much comfort in Caromillo's house; we slept on the clay floor, but even it could impart a feeling of home in the midst of such a storm. But the Mexicans were strange men to be quartered with. Epiphany, who had torn his shirt riding through the thorns, took that garment off with some idea of mending it, and his bare back was all scarred with the marks of his Penitente creed. Flippant and cynical in his conversation, light-hearted certainly, and yet he was bound in the ascetic traditions and gloomy piety of his people. I dared not ask him about his religion, yet I wondered if he ever would be "crucified" and hang on a Penitente cross till he fainted, as so many of them do.

Next morning there was a silver dawn. The Mesa Escrita was all encrusted and hanging with snow. It had taken on an aspect of the fantastic and hardly belonged to this world. And as we rode towards it, because of the mists it grew farther away. I saw it, as it were, removed into

the past, with wanderers remaining there from a bygone age. I would have liked to write my name also on the great rock—*I came and I passed*. But being on our horses we did not stay. We left our footprints in the snow. The snow was deep; the silence was utter. Even our horses made not the slightest sound as they padded over the trackless waste of snow. Snow-veils hurried across the mesas—snow descended upon us and hid all from view. Thus it was on Thanksgiving Morning we got lost and neither of us could say which was the way.

We rode up to the stone giants, a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet high, standing at the entrance to the Cañon de los Gigantos, and they looked down at us with their snow-crowned heads. We rode to ranch houses only to find them empty of human beings as their byres were devoid of cattle. Epiphany saw a dark figure in the snow and spurred hard after it and I followed, and we came up with a fleeing Indian squaw and a dog, and she would say nothing, but plunged abruptly into the bush. When we found her again it was in a *hogan*, a shelter only one-third covered from the snow. There was a fire burning, and the squaw sat herself down in front of it and would answer nought, either to Spanish or to English questions. Her little children stared at us, and her dogs sat on their haunches about the fire.

We got nothing from her. But to cut a story short, we went after that by compass and map and got to Vogt's ranch, and being Thanksgiving Day there was a grand spread of turkey and

cranberry sauce and many preserves, and very pretty girls to look at and intelligent people to talk to. The storm and the wilderness had been suddenly exchanged for civilisation. I went that night to a Mormon wedding dance at Ramah.

Mr. Vogt is the official curator of Inscription Rock, and has done a great deal to preserve the remarkable surface which is scrawled not only with the names of famous Spaniards but with the pictographs and hieroglyphics of the Cave-dwellers. It has certainly been a great cave-dwelling region at one time. Vogt took me to a well-preserved village of cave-dwellings behind his ranch-house. He found when he bought the property he had bought this prehistoric village also. Natural caves had been added to by the hollowing out of the rock, and the houses partitioned off and the wind walled off with piled rocks and mud. The theory is that the people of Cibola, to defend themselves from the Apaches, Comanches, and Navajos, took to caves at one time. But, of course, theories innumerable could be brought forward. No one has learned to read the hieroglyphics of these people.

One especially good service Mr. Vogt has performed as curator of the Rock, and that is, to have erased the names of a score or so of modern visitors who, with a nonchalance which is almost sublime, had written their names down with those of the Conquistadores; the Winklesteins of Chicago, the Joneses of Jonesville.

This Mesa Escrita is, however, little visited. For it is thirty or forty miles from Cibola or



Zunyi, and those who go to the Indian pueblo seldom go farther. It is in part of the most remote country of America—as the Zunyis themselves think, it is the place farthest from the edge. Hence, I suppose, the Mormon settlement of Ramah. For the Mormons, being a persecuted sect, have ever sought out places where they were not likely to be disturbed.

Ramah is an American village, not Mexican or Indian in type, but a bit of North America, all little wooden houses and neatly fenced yards. We drove to the wedding dance, and I talked to the bishop and the elders and found a rather sad lot of Mormons where, after all, far from polygamy being practised, there were not enough girls to go round. The eligible brides seemed mostly pale and thin. With what devotion the Mormon young men clasped Betty and Katherine, who, unlike the Mormon girls, were well-formed, open-air girls, full of life and desire.

Another day passed and we drove to Zunyi. It was the last stage. There was deep snow and mist over it, with vague sunset lights wandering in the mist. Up on the mesas I saw the first two of the cities of Cibola—in the ruins in which Coronado left them. And there in the mist I saw a third of the cities, but greater and grander, with towers and domes, and unlike anything Indians ever built. Golden and rose lights of sunset tinted the shadowy outline. I said to Vogt and his nieces—"Look! Cibola!" but even as I did so it had gone, it had melted into the general configuration of the Mesas of Zunyi.

It was Coronado's mirage seen again—and his disillusionment.

It was dark when we arrived at the real Cibola, the strange and unwonted city which the Spaniards found, the home, far from the haunts of other men, of the wonderful Zunyi tribe with their coal-black hair, bright-coloured little turbans, turquoise earrings, bead necklaces and silver rings and bracelets and brooches and ceintures, with their elaborate dances and religious rituals, and a Nature worship against which Catholicism has never been able to make way.

When we entered the first large house we saw that the Shaleco Birds had already come down from the mountains, and in each of the Shaleco houses prayers were being chanted by the Indians. Zunyi's halls were all alight with large lamps and hung with every kind of glittering wampum. There were great white beams and white walls decorated with dadoes of printed cotton, there were ropes along the wall and there hung silver belts and *serapes*, *fajas* and deerskins, shawls, beautiful blankets, necklaces. There were bowls of the sacred meal upon the floor, and a long line of sprinkled meal led up to what seemed to be an altar—the Shaleco altar. In front of that stood motionless the framework and vest of the Shaleco Bird, as it were, being consecrated, and Indians chanted unendingly prayers and incantations. Along the walls stood visiting Indians, chiefly Navajos, wrapped in their resplendent blankets, waiting and silent.

Up till midnight, however, the chief activity

seemed to be in the kitchens, where a great feast was being prepared. The kitchens were large enough for stacks of joints of meat to be piled up—and along the whole length of the walls flamed log fires with a dozen high old earthenware pots simmering upon them. The odour of the joints was almost overpowering, but it was pleasantly blended with the smoke which went up the vast vent of the hollow wall. Old squaws with bent backs tended pots and flames, and they wore long bright kerchiefs on their heads and down their backs. Certainly they never knew how cold it was outside.

We went to “Pablito” and “Emily,” fanciful names of an Indian and his wife. Their true names they will seldom divulge. They gave us a room and blankets—in case we could snatch a few hours of sleep now and then. Pablito’s house was a strange hive of activity. It had a long corridor which led to a bakehouse, and through our room and along this corridor went a procession of squaws carrying pumpkins so heavy we interceded now and then to help them, and carrying tubs of “*chili con carne*”—roast meat and chili—and of “*frijoles*” (beans).

At eleven we all lay down to try and sleep, the girls chaffing one another a great deal. I had expected to meet Wilfrid Ewart and the poet, Witter Bynner, at the Zunyi dance, and we heard they had arrived. But in these first hours they eluded us. I do not know whether it was the expectation of meeting Ewart or Bynner or merely the spirit of the age, but the two pretty nieces, of

which perhaps Betty was the more vain (though who can say?), insisted on curling their hair at one in the morning. They had brought curling-tongs with them, and so re-lit the oil lamp and heated the tongs in the glass chimney and laboriously curled each beautiful lock. We men watched them from the floor with half-closed eyes, then we got up also and sallied forth into the ice-bound streets and visited all the shrines.

By that time the Indians had feasted their guests and all the dances were in full activity. Where before in the hall of a Shaleco house had been the drone and the stillness of prayers before a shrine, there was now the gaiety of marvellous ritual dances.

The Shaleco and the Mud-heads were dancing together. I imagine that Shaleco is the Spanish name for the Bird-god of the Zunyi Indians. *Chaleco* is Spanish for a vest, and the chief characteristic of the Bird-god is his beautiful embroidered vests which hang over interior hoops and fold over one another. The Bird is nine or ten feet high. Imagine, therefore, how high the rooms in which he dances! It is an astonishing bird. He wears a sun-halo of eagles' feathers, he has horns of turquoise colour, and at his throat is a voluminous black ruff of thickly clustered little feathers. Black holes are his eyes, and his beak is a long, straight cleft piece of wood which opens and shuts and clack-clacks in menace or in mirth. The embroidered vests below are of turquoise colour fading towards green. Inside all this, of

course, is a hidden Indian, hidden in all except his moccasins.

The Mud-heads, in contrast to the Shalecos, were almost naked and were ugly. Their bodies were painted mud-colour (adobe colour), and they wore over their natural heads a mask of misshapeness. They looked like badly made men of mud—

As if some journeyman had made man.

There were knobs on their heads, finger holes for eyes; they had protruding bottle-neck mouths. They wore no jewellery, but round their middles hung a slit kilt of black material, and as they danced their bare mud-coloured hips slipped in and out.

I was told they represented in mythology the offspring of a brother and sister. Their function, however, was that of clowns. I took their real symbolism to mean—human beings in the presence of the Nature god—absurd and ugly. When the Shalecos had returned to the mountains I noticed that the Mud-heads took off their masks and danced seriously and beautifully again.

But in the strange midnight the Shalecos in the dance constantly chased them. There was something whimsical in the expression of the Shaleco, especially when it leapt forward dancing from the shrine. It ran like a bird and squeaked and clack-clacked as it ran. Katherine Vogt took the attention of the Shaleco directly she entered the first hall; was it her bright red tam-o'-shanter or her curled locks, I cannot say.

But he flew at her across the room so that she retreated, whilst the Bird, with the lightest of turns, had checked its speedy advance and was returning to the shrine, and the four Mud-heads present were mumming and spluttering and step-dancing back and forth in ungainly gestures, and the chorus of singers and drummers at the back of the room kept the throb of time. Scores of Indians watched from the sides, scores crowded the doorways; the light of the large lamps above was warm and bright, and the dancing never ceased.

We went from house to house. At another house a band of Zunyis were dancing a Navajo dance in honour of the Navajos present. At another the Long-horns were dancing. The Long-horns had mitred heads of red and blue, masked hidden face, black feather-ruff at throat like that of the Shaleco, but bare body and legs and beautiful brown moccasins. They carried in their hands spears of horn and a bunch of twigs. In their dance the chief movement was a running forward with bent knees, like a Roman soldier, spear in hand. But they smote no one till the dance was over next day. Then, I believe, they smote every one they could.

In another hall danced a buckskin-headed child of dawn with a white taper-like point on the height of his head and a crimson diadem set with silver conches about his brows; a beautiful and serene figure, and the most highly idealised and romantic of the dancers. In the house where he was dancing I met the poet, Bynner, tired and yet

spell-bound. "This is the most beautiful of them all, I think," he said. The dance was pure poetry to him.

In another room danced the Fire-god, naked, blackened, ugly. His whole body was soot-coloured and he had, like a string about his middle, the meanest of loin-cloths. Far from being a fire-god he seemed an uncouth savage. But with him danced two Shaleco Birds, a Long-horn, and six Mud-heads, and they made an astonishing medley.

Away in a corner, long-haired, long-faced, sat the chorus, with wide-open mouths, never ceasing their *Ho-i-ho-i*, *ho-ho*, *ha-ha-ha-ha*, and beating on their tiny drums. Resplendent scarlet and orange colours lined the walls, the blanket-cloaks of the tall Moorish-looking Navajo Indians. Wampum glittered on every wall. Eyes glittered also. Glittered also the embroidered vests and strange blue horns of the Shaleco Birds—only the Mud-heads made dissonance and disharmony, burbling through their mud-masks and calling out obscenities and bad jokes and posturing misshapeness. But all moved, back and forth, back and forth, tripping it, turning, marking time, waving hands to the time of the tom-toms in the corner.

What the Spaniards of Coronado thought of all this has not been recorded. Their eyes sought gold—but this is not a gold country; the Indians do not wear it, do not seek it. Even to take all their silver and turquoise away is not equal to one or even one-tenth of the value of one of Monte-

zuma's presents to Hernan Cortes. They must have been annoyed. The Shalecos, the Mud-heads, the Long-horns ! Had they ridden five hundred leagues to see these?

They had no poets with them, only brutal soldiers and vulgar priests. They were even capable of burning these innocent Indians alive, and proposed, as a lesson in their Christianity, to burn two hundred of them at once in one day. Even that was waste of time when the question of gold was in the mind. Behold, a clever Indian has started the story of Golden Quivira, and will lead Coronado a thousand miles farther into the desert, away from Cibola, which asks only to be left in peace.

The Spaniards in Southern Mexico found gems innumerable and gold without price, and they obliterated without a thought Aztec culture. But in the north they found nothing but sand and cactus, and so left the Indians for the most part at peace.

So to-day at the "centre of the earth" the Shalecos still come down from the mountains and dance for the children of Cibola. We watched them till dawn—then we returned to our room. Emily, our little Zunyi hostess, was sleeping in my blanket on the floor, and was alarmed and about to get up again when she saw us return, but I gently put her back on the floor and patted her on the cheek, so that she settled down to sleep again. The rest of us lay down on the floor in the miscellany of blankets and wraps and slept as we could for an hour or two till the sun came up.



For it had been a tiring night, even for us who merely looked on.

Only next morning did I encounter Wilfrid Ewart, though he also had been pilgrimaging from room to room and dance to dance the night long; which shows how much was happening in Zunyi when two friends could thus miss one another all night.

"What happens to-day?" he asked of a tall friendly Indian standing bare-headed in the snow.

"Shaleco go way back up into the mountains. Not come for another year," said he playfully. "Way up . . . and no come for another year. Next year Shaleco come again."

And in a little while the six Shaleco Birds came out of the houses and crossed the river, and the Long-horns came, and the Fire-god, and the one I call the Child of Dawn, and they danced in the snow which had melted under the noonday sun and in the mud. First the Long-horns danced alone. Then they returned to the pueblo and its streets and roofs, and smote men and women on their backs; once, *thwack*, twice, *thwack*, whilst the fleet-footed Shalecos danced by the water's edge.

Hundreds of men and women watched from the house-tops of the pueblo. Over a hundred horsemen, with gay kerchiefs about their brows, stood on the farther side of the river with the Shalecos, and five or six motor-cars with American sightseers were drawn up also. The mighty mountains, the Butte and the Twin Butte, immemorially sacred, looked down at the scene

across the snows. Then the Long-horns returned from smiting the village and danced again with the great strange Shalecos. The hundred horsemen suddenly galloped away toward the mountains, and Shalecos and Long-horns began to move rapidly away from the pueblo. And I stood with Wilfrid Ewart in the snow and shine of that fair afternoon and watched them fade from our eyes.

"Shaleco has gone away to the mountains. Shaleco not come again for another year," said I softly, echoing the Indian.

"By Jove!" cried Wilfrid, as if waking from a reverie. "That was fine. This has been the best of it all."

And then Wilfrid had to go. For he was one in a crowd in a car. And I was left behind when almost every one else had gone.

And at night I saw the Mud-heads dance again, this time without their masks and showing their true features. Two old men stood, one each side of the sacred shrine, and balanced eagle feathers while they danced, now and then dipping the feathers in the sacred meal. The drum-men beat the drums and hollaed, and the brown men danced and perspired. The Shalecos, alas, were gone. The Mud-heads had become ourselves, now repentant and prayerful and asking blessings from the Bird.

## VI. DESCENT INTO THE GRAND CANYON

Its discovery was part of the fruitless quest of El Dorado by Coronado—the greatest hole in the world and nothing in it. He had hoped to find another Mexico in the North and despoil it of its jewels. Like the Vandal he was, he plunged into the American Sahara to loot another Rome. Cibola and Quivira were his glittering dreams. He rode in all two thousand miles, cactus and alkali-whited plains all the way. He fought not men but deserts; instead of storied Cibola, he found the mud-huts of the Zunyi Indians, rich only in their personal adornments of turquoise and silver; and instead of fantastic Quivira with princes in golden armour, he found near the great bend of the Arkansas River the tent-dwellers of what is now Wichita. The mirage of El Dorado appeared constantly before him and his followers. His horsemen wandered in many directions seeking tidings of gold or of kingdoms to conquer. And one of them came, as was inevitable, to the great gap in the earth hundreds of miles long, leagues across, leagues, as it seemed, downward, the Cañon del Grande, and the descent of it was as a descent to the hidden heart of the world.

It added one more fantastic page to the story of the King of Spain's new lands wherein "of antres vast and deserts idle" much was spoken.

Geologists do not agree as to the number of thousands of years ago the accident occurred which made the Canyon. We shall therefore appear pathetically human in our narrow gaze if we say, "Now nearly four hundred years have passed since the Spaniards discovered it." There are dwellings of cave-men on the northern cliff, inaccessible as the nests of the white eagles who stare from the ledges. And yet it does mean something to us living now that it is nearly four hundred years since our civilisation took cognizance of the Grand Canyon, this bit of chaos left over at the Creation of the world.

We have tamed Niagara with power-houses, and they have put lunch-counters among the branches of the giant trees of California. Nearly all the natural wonders of America have been altered. But the Grand Canyon remains changeless and unchangeable. It is true it has become a wonder-gaze for tourists, a "stop-over" 'twixt Los Angeles and Chicago. But there is nothing in that. Ninety-six in every hundred of those who visit the Canyon merely look at it, go along the rim, spend a night at the railway hotel, and resume their journey next day. But four in a hundred venture down into the abyss.

After going to Cibola, Ewart and I decided to leave this part of the country, but before departing we went to the Grand Canyon together. So with knapsacks on our shoulders we left New Mexico

for the wilderness of Northern Arizona. And we determined to walk down into the depths of the Canyon, from the snow and ice of the dreadful plateau down to flowers blooming and gentle airs.

Early one morning in December, therefore, we stood on the verge, and in its sublimity its first awful grandeur was disclosed; its gigantic abysses and grey-green pyramids, its rosy castellated heights gleaming with sunshine.

"Some hole in the wall, I'll say," cried a Mr. Babbitt, consuming a "stack of hot cakes" at the Harvey lunch-counter. "Me to hike it down there—*not . . . on . . . your . . . life!*"

The trail is heavily frosted, steep, and narrow. It is even difficult to stop oneself in the first slides that are strides. Both of us sat down suddenly and unpremeditatedly once or twice. We held on to scrub and jagged rock, footing the snow gingerly.

But something of magic had taken us. The rock walls in long slabs looked at us, came up to us, stared at us. There was a new morning silence in which occasionally we heard the wings of tiny birds fluttering. As it were climbing the outer stairway or stone spiral of some great donjon or keep built on a mighty rock—so we looked out over abysses, and were granted at moments unexpected views of frowning and dreadful cliffs. The eyes spoke to the mind of vaster surfaces and greater bulks of rock than it yet had known. And an intellectual perspective was obtained.

Going downward rapidly we met trees made tiny, and they started to our feet like feathers.

Rocks which from above had been merely formalised bulks gained in character as if we were approaching drawbridges of fantastic castles. Old red pyramids torn by the ages stood before us in awful actuality, exhibiting the myriad scars and crusts of time.

The trail, an Indian one, was there before the Spaniards came, for the Indians used it and walked it nearly a hundred miles. But it is improved now and made safe for the tourist on a mule—safer still for the man upon his feet. The descent is naturally rapid. One strides over hundreds, over thousands of feet, which it is labour indeed to climb up. One moment one is facing the great cream and pale-green fissured wall of the upper limestone, the “key-stone,” as it is called. At the next breathing-space you are below that and facing red cliff, which develops before the downward-going eyes into a mighty wall, whilst the cream rock is left far above you, a cliff in the sky.

At three thousand feet below, all the cold airs have gone; there are green leaves on the trees. The flowers of the willow-herb have gone to seed, but the leaves are tender. Japanese sunflowers are still poised blooming in the sunshine, and where spring water comes freshening from rock-walls the gentle violet snuggles and is at home.

But we come out on an exposed plateau, above the madly-rushing Colorado River but below the main masses of the ravine. Between wall and wall of the Canyon rise gigantic isolated rocks, as

if there were a city built in the trough of the river. Rim to rim the gap is sixteen miles across—so there is “verge enough and ample space” for adamantine temples, pavilions, and towers. The plateau is boulder-strewn and only enlivened by the iris-like yucca stems and by small pink cactus and prickly pear. On our left is an appalling great red fortress of stone whose sheer wall cuts across the life-light of the zenith; on our right and below us is the rock-cleavage of the hidden Colorado River; whilst above us in a seraphically serene noonday bask the domes of isolated rocks fantastically named, and yet happily named too—the Temple of Shiva, the Temple of Isis, the Temple of Buddha.

On the left as we walk on comes into view, far aloft, a cream-coloured sky-castle, all happy in the sun. But, lowering the eyes, there resumes its sway the fortress whose great wall we are turning, and we begin to see its vast blood-red and green base. We walk into a cold shadow which seems as substantial as the rocks themselves, and we cross the broad stony scarp of precipitous cliffs, going downward, till we come right under what seems an ancient castle—out of fairyland or the England of the Morte d’Arthur, a quadrilateral of blood in a hideous pool of darkness.

But no giant sallied forth with blood-stained axe. No one is at home in any fortress, castle, tower, or temple—no more than in the rooms of the stone and mud-closed caves of the cliff-dwellers. Not even a tourist—no, not a mule.

Only certainly wild asses in great numbers wherever there is any pasture, uncatchable donkeys who sneeze at you at the most unexpected moments.

Ewart and I sat by a spring at noon and rested and talked whilst the tumbling water spoke to us also, and we boiled a pot over dry weeds and bits of cactus later on and had our lunch. It was a happy moment—there was a sense of escape, as if we had gone to Southern California or Mexico and got away from the rigorous winter of the exalted deserts of the South.

“By George,” Ewart cried, “I nearly took a toss up above. What have you on your boots? I have nails.”

I had rubber on mine.

“Yes, I could not get a foothold on that ice; I was reduced to hands and knees.”

“Curious, they say they have had no human accidents here. The last accident was when eight horses yoked together and laden with T.N.T. went over the brink and fell a sheer five hundred feet.”

“I did not hear of that.”

“Yes, one of the horses was new to the Canyon and proved unruly. He fouled his neighbour and he slipped over the side, pulling all seven horses after him.”

“That must have been a terrible splash.”

“But the T.N.T. did not explode.”

“No!”

“The horses were all killed instantaneously though; they jumped right out of their skins.”



"You'd think the Grand Canyon would tempt suicides. It's a certain and sudden death. Dramatic and spectacular, too!"

"Too much time for reflection and meditation before you get here," I hazarded. "The man coming to commit suicide changes his mind before he gets here and goes down on a mule instead."

Ewart laughed.

"You are a fellow who ought to be cautious," I said after a while.

"Why specially?"

"Because I don't think, strictly speaking, that you are over lucky. You are a person who has had accidents. I've known you in three, any of which might have cost you your life."

"Well, I don't know," said Ewart. "I'd say I was lucky. I've come through the War and two motor accidents, and escaped with my life up till now."

He jumped nervously.

"Oh," he cried unexpectedly. "Unberufen!" and turned round him to find a piece of wood to touch.

But there was no wood handy. We were in a woodless ravine. He seemed quite anxious and snatched at a piece of dead cactus.

I laughed heartily.

"What do you mean by 'Unberufen'?" I cried.

"I think one ought not to be too sure," said Wilfrid solemnly.

"What a fix, to be in a place with no wood to touch," said I mirthfully. "Supposing under such circumstances one was to touch one's head,

implying modestly that it was the nearest thing to wood one could find, do you think the Fate that watches over us would be appeased?"

Ewart smiled.

We talked of President Wilson who was superstitiously unsuperstitious. An extraordinary thing; he did things for preference on the thirteenth of the month, sat down thirteen to dinner, sailed on the thirteenth of the month in cabin No. Thirteen, all of set purpose.

He has turned out to be frightfully unlucky—we agreed.

"Time to make a move now, if we're going to reach a shelter for the night. What do you think?"

Again we lifted our knapsacks and footed it across the stones—to rose-red mountains and cream and green pavilions of stone. Next time we sat to rest and to share an orange together we faced, as it were, an encampment of all the mountains. There were giant steps from the northern heights down, down to the black river, and there was the sound of rivers running in the rocks like many rats. We walked to the great slides which overtopped the waters, to the hundred ledges of the serried grey rock which makes the river's bed. Then we passed into vast mountain chambers where, despite company, you felt you were alone whilst judges and distributors of dooms considered you.

Afternoon grew to dusk of evening, and the trail was harder to keep. Monument Creek rushed from underground its short course to the

receiving Colorado. We were baffled with the way. Sunset rays far above made roseate the peaks and the ridges, but rapidly faded down below as if light would not carry to us. And night closed sharply in, with starlight and a swelling magnificence of all that was material in the womb of the earth.

Our quest had then become the Hermit Cabin or Camp, as it is called, a place wherein to spend the night. Darkness almost hid the vague Tonto trail, and the way as we traced it grew much wilder. There were many slippery rocks and queer drops, which it seemed to us not even a mule could have taken.

We began to think not unhappily of a night in a cave or under some overhanging ledge of the cliff, when far away we espied a lost light that flickered uncertainly in the darkness. That indubitably must be the little rest-house on the fast-running Hermit River, and we took heart from the light and made for it.

We came to the door and no dog barked. All was utterly silent. We opened the door and faced a man and his wife who were working at a kitchen table on which was spread the most unlikely things to find at the bottom of the Grand Canyon—sugar-plums, yes, bright red, green, and yellow squares of candy dusted with white sugar. In their spare time in the long winter evenings the keeper and his spouse made these sugar-plums from the pith of the cactus and sold them later for a fair reward. For cactus candy is a good sweet, one made by the Indians before the white man came.

So we dined with the keeper and were given candy for dessert. And we listened to many curious tales of the Canyon and admired the skins of the wild cats the keeper had shot. Then we walked out into the balmy night air and looked up to the flame points of the stars and the golden lines of their rays. The moon came up slowly from behind some vast black prison-wall of stone, and she dimmed the stars. Then the grandeur of moonlight filled the Canyon as it were a precious basin. We slept down below moon and stars and crags upon a happy earth, and all night long the temples of Shiva and Isis and Buddha and the blood-red castle and the white cliff palaces stared into the Arizona sky. And we heard no coyote cry nor felt one chill breath of the snowland above us.

Next day the naked light of dawn lighted up stark cliffs and jagged sky pointers and the green cabins of Hermit Camp under their yellow umbrellas of wilted aspens. And we climbed up from the depth into the cold heights once more. The mountains on all hands grew up with us as we climbed, and towered above and were measured by us, and sank at last beneath us and remained down in the gap with the rushing river and the silences that are below. We looked down at sunset four thousand feet from the rim to the river, and we reflected that in a way the Canyon had possessed us wholly and we in our hearts possessed only part of it. It voided us out at the top, it plumbed our hearts, it took away our breaths, it turned the last page of the word-books of our minds.

## VII. GOOD-BYE TO THE HORSES

RETURNING from Grand Canyon we discussed plans for the coming year. Ewart had his Scots Guards history, which he ought to finish by the summer, and then he was going north to the Canadian Line, and proposed to make a study of the relationship of the two peoples, Canadian and American, for a book to be called *The Unguarded Line*. I had in mind to go to Mexico, continuing this study of the quest of El Dorado along the traces of Cortes's conquest. The severity of the New Mexico winter decided Ewart against staying there any longer, and he yearned to go with me to Mexico. Against the latter I dissuaded him. He had the weight of the history on his mind, as something which must be done, must be got over, for he had contracted to do it. He said he would take the history with him and do it there. But I felt Mexico too unsafe a place for him to be in by himself. He did not know any Spanish and therefore would be taken for a "Gringo" and treated accordingly by a people who had the reputation of being extremely disobliging. Ewart, however, was about equally drawn to New Orleans, which for long had been a city of romance to him, a place he certainly wanted to know. There he could live very well till the

spring and then, if he wished, return to Santa Fe. We would all return to Santa Fe in the spring and have some last gallops over the desert before the summer. Ewart decided to go to New Orleans.

The immediate problem was the bestowal of our horses. Ewart referred the matter to Cowboy Pete, a near neighbour, asking him if he would like the use of a horse for the rest of the winter, or if he would like to buy a horse.

The cowboy was abusive and amusing.

"Do I want your powny? Naoh. I tell yer, the on-y way I'd take that thar broom-tail o' yourn would be with a twenty-dollar bill tied round his neck. The best thing you can do is put a brand on him, then take him up the mountains and leave him there. Turn him loose, I tell yar! Then if you come back in the spring and find him, why, you've got a horse, see; but if not, why, you've saved the price of his feed. If he's a sturdy powny he'll last out the winter or-right. But I tell you, right now, I can buy pownies like that o' yourn by the car-load at five dollars apiece just now. No one has any use for pownies in the winter, cost more'n they're worth in feed. Tell yar straight, I wouldn't give him hell-room on the ranch. But put a brand on him—a new brand—and take him up the mountains."

Cowboy Pete spoke very loudly, evidently under the impression that Ewart was deaf, for the Englishman had a habit of asking questions twice. I stood by and interpreted the one to the other.

Ewart, however, did not trust to the idea of abandoning George among the snows, though it

is a customary way of keeping horses in the winter in New Mexico. He had paid twenty-five dollars for him, and he thought he ought eventually to get some of it back. He therefore sedulously sought buyers. At length he struck a deal with a Mexican hauler of wood. George was to be delivered up for twelve and a half dollars.

"If only you could have been there," said Ewart afterwards. "I led old George down the street and was about to hand him over when the Mexican's brother came flying out of a cottage and started to abuse George in Spanish, finding every imaginable fault in him. I said he had carried the poet hundreds of miles without misadventure before I bought him, but other Mexicans joined in the dispute and I was obliged to let George go for ten. The last I saw of him he was hauling wood on Palace Avenue."

My wife and I had become more attached to our horses, having had them longer and done more on them, and the idea of parting with them was very sad. Only on the very last night did I part with Billy, and Buck went a day or so before. We found good homes for both of them, and I believe the happy life they had with us continues still, as friends bestride them.

Just before Christmas, then, we parted from Santa Fe, Ewart some days ahead of us for New Orleans and we for Mexico City. We expected to meet in the spring or summer in the States once more, and little imagined as we said goodbye that we should be reunited at the end of the year and then separated, as it were, for ever.

BOOK VI  
MEXICO





## I. THE GOLD

MEXICO is a country marked for conquest. It is no doubt the most romantic country of the New World, but its history has been the most sordid. It is gilded with tales of fortune and wonder. Even its sunsets must seem of a more marvellous colouring than those of other shores. It has been, and is, a land of riches. And it has, for that reason, attracted the violence of mankind. Even before the Spaniards came, Mexico lived in a state of war. Empire had succeeded empire. The crushing of the Aztecs by Cortes was not a surprise to the Indians: they fully expected some new race to come out of the horizon and destroy them as they themselves had destroyed others. The difference between warfare with the Spaniard and warfare before the Spaniard came, was that the latter was more racial and less covetous. Certainly there never had been a people with such a craving for gold as the bearded men of Cortes. Their passion for it was cited by Aztecs as a reason for disbelieving in their supposed divine origin. They could do without women but they could not go without gold. Though they seemed able to command the lightning, were they not slaves of the yellow metal?

Gold as presents they took greedily. When presents ceased they took it by demand, and then

by robbery. They tortured Indians to learn secrets of hidden treasure, burned noble enemies alive; they fought one another. Their love of it was stronger than their loyalty to one another. When they had got it they hid it for fear of being dispossessed of it, and when they had hidden it they lost it. And then others sought for it and fought for it. Gold was most freely mingled with Spanish blood.

The story of the quest of the gold is of the primitive kind that belongs not so much to economics and politics as to the child's picture-novel. No doubt it can still cause a thrill in the pirate blood of many a grown man. But the interest is now gloriously fictional. Mexico is still a land of gold, but you no longer go there, like Ali Baba or Cassim, with sacks. Now, somewhere or other, you have to get that prized *oro* over a bank counter. There is no great difference in the result, except that you may get more gold and lose less blood than in the old days, but oh! the difference in the manner, in the style of getting it.

It seems incongruous to think of the mining enterprises, oil concessions, and trading concerns of to-day as carrying on the tradition of the Conquistadores of Spain. Nevertheless it is so; there are armies and navies behind the trade, and there is *policy* correlating the significance of the whole.

One of the most profitable wars in history was that of 1848, by which the United States obtained the greater part of her mineral wealth of to-day, the gold of California, the silver of Nevada, the

copper of Arizona. It is true that had these vast territories remained in the control of the Mexican people they would not have been exploited to the extent that they are now. The new stirring civilisation of California could hardly have sprung into existence. Under Mexican rule there would have been no new Western universities, but no doubt there would have been new battlefields instead. On the other hand, if the United States had taken over the vast metalliferous State of Chihuahua as well, what wealth would be coming forth of it now!

Instead of wealth starting from the State of Chihuahua, revolutions start from there. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the wealth-seeking population of the United States should feel some urge to change political turbulence into productive peace.

The whole of Mexico is a great treasure-cave for those who know the words which open the door. The Mexicans clearly do not know, or they have forgotten the words. Instead of saying "*Open Sesame*" they say "*Open Blood-vessels*," or some such impolite cacophony. They say very loudly "*Make the Foreigner Pay*," and things of that sort, but it does not open the door. President Obregon has said, rather pathetically, that Mexico is capable of sustaining a population of one hundred millions instead of the poverty-stricken fifteen millions which now inhabit it. And he has pointed out the paradox that the richest country in the world has the poorest people. Mexico and Russia are somewhat alike in this respect; in

both cases the lands are marvellously rich and the people incredibly poor. But if they wish to be rich there is only one way, and that is to find the means of unlocking the potential treasures of the land. To the Anglo-Saxon that seems a simple matter—quit fighting, begin working, cultivate honesty, educate the illiterate, enforce the laws. But to the Mexican that seems to be psychologically impossible.

I believe that in time the United States will finish her conquest of Mexico. The conquest is being now furthered by peaceful penetration and partially thwarted by revolutionary governments. War follows war with accompanying destruction of property, and it is such outbreaks as that of 1923-24 which directly invite intervention. The provocation is continuous. Some critics urge that America wishes to be provoked.

The speculative mind may pause on the thought of the material grandeur of the United States when it gets Mexico fairly going. The gold of the world is largely massed at Washington even now—the rich people of the world are the Americans. America is the greatest organised unity of peoples and unity of resources—she is already capable of initiating, if she wished, a world-policy which no other nation dare dream of. But with the realisation of the Mexican Ophir there will no longer be any quest of El Dorado. El Dorado will be discovered and identified. El Dorado will be the North-American continent from Panama to the “Unguarded Line.” El Dorado will be America.

## II. APPROACHING MEXICO FROM THE NORTH

IT came as a pleasant surprise, upon entering Mexican territory, to receive gold coins in exchange for paper money. Mexico since 1920 has had a gold and silver currency and no bank notes. All the depreciated paper has been withdrawn from circulation, and there is that much health in the *Estados Unidos Mexicanos* which obtains in no European country to-day, a stability of the value of money.

One certainly feels as if one had in one's possession something real—with a pocketful of handsome gold pieces. The bright silver peso is rather heavy in the pocket, it is true, but one does not soon tire of looking at the coinage and rejoicing in it. When one has travelled round Europe with locally printed francs and wads of worthless crowns and marks, and even in the United States with its many shredded and greasy one-dollar bills, one feels a due astonishment that Mexico in one respect is showing the world its way. Unfortunately, however, the new "Bank of Issue" is to begin printing bank-notes again very soon.

The ten-peso piece with "*Independencia y*

*Libertad* " cut into its unmilled edge reminds one of the Russian ten-rouble bits. But the Mexican twenty-peso, worth two guineas or ten dollars, is a beautiful and distinctive gold piece, with its impress of the elaborate and detailed "Calendar Stone" of the Aztecs.

Mexico has triumphed over the currency trouble, but like Europe and the United States she still has the passport disease, demanding photographs and fees before you enter the land. The United States, however, has exerted her power and influence to remove this obstruction as far as her own nationals are concerned. American citizens go back and forth at will without show of visa. Our Foreign Office could achieve the same result, but does not stir. It may seem a small matter to those who do not travel, but it is an undoubted convenience. The sudden demand for photographs often delays the British traveller twenty-four hours at El Paso or Laredo. And he naturally asks himself why he should pay ten shillings while his American neighbour gets in free.

For us these matters were arranged at El Paso. Here my wife and I spent a few days, met Duncan Aikman working on the *El Paso Times*, and with his hospitable assistance we viewed the frontier city. I learned from him that Wilfrid Ewart had broken his journey to New Orleans at this point and had decided to take a ten days' trip in Mexico. The tickets of the Southern Pacific Railroad give travellers special facilities for doing that. It enables Americans to get a drink if they

wish. Ewart, I found, had bought a round-trip ticket to take him to Mexico City and then back to Texas by a different route—by San Luis Potosi and Laredo.

I at once felt some apprehension for my friend. "I do hope he comes to no harm," I exclaimed.

"He'll be all right," said Aikman. "I have given him an introduction to the Governor of Chihuahua, General Enriquez. Mexico has become much quieter."

I was much struck by the contrast between El Paso and the Spanish city opposite it. El Paso grows and spreads on the desert like some super cactus barbed with every barb of civilisation. It is amazing in its artificiality, its unwontedness. I have been in frontier cities between the Turkestan Desert and Mongolia—low, squalid, utterly unblessed by God or man. But El Paso on the Mexican line is nothing like them. The sidewalks of New York and Chicago are continued there; the line of their house-tops against the Texas sky barely attenuates.

But opposite El Paso, on the southern side of the Rio Grande, is El Paso's opposite, la Ciudad de Juarez. There is only a bridge between, a mere thirty or forty yards of wood and iron—Mexico one side, America the other; Mexican squalor on one hand, American civilisation in full blast on the other. The three minutes transition as you walk across the muddy Rio is surely one of the most surprising in the New World. The road is level, but you step down as into an abyss.

In the United States city is every sign of wealth



and self-respect, of militant commerce and the rewards and aims of trade. Schools, theatres, churches, vie with one another to raise the population and magnify the name of the city and the fame of America. The newspapers cry the news of the day and the *El Paso Times* seems no whit less vigorous or informed than the *Tribune* of Chicago itself. The hotels of El Paso, the luxurious Paso del Norte, the commodious Sheldon, are grandiose in charge and style. No drummer from another city needs to walk along a corridor for his bath. And as for restaurants there seems to be a sort of special El Paso *chic*. They infallibly bring you finger bowls, and no El Pasoan drinks from one in mistake. But without a jest, one fares better and is treated with more dignity in an El Paso café than in New York.

The air of El Paso is pure; the roads are clean; there are no hoboes sitting in the little park where its alligators live under the fountain; the business men wear ironed clothes; their gait is dignified and steady except, perhaps, when coming from the direction of the Juarez bridge. What more can one say? El Paso is real genuine United States. And the fort above it with its barracks and soldiers worships the Stars and Stripes no more than does the business world below.

But walk across that little bridge and the vision has gone. You have more effectually left Uncle Sam than if you had spent a week on the Atlantic doing so. You are in Europe. You have left the banner of Kansas behind and are with the publicans and sinners once again.

Loungers, beggars, drunken men, saloons, gambling houses, dust and stink, mouldering mud houses and poor wooden cabins give the first impression of Mexico in the north. Directly you cross the bridge the beggars, as in Spain itself, are whining and extending arms. Of course, as one goes farther there is a cathedral and a bull-ring, and there are some large American shops. An American trolley-car comes out of El Paso, crosses that bridge, circles through Juarez like a figure skater, and goes out again into America by another bridge, and the steel lines hypnotise one to follow—back to the comfortable States.

The city of Juarez has, however, a bad name which is somewhat exaggerated. Vice by repute is generally magnified. Juarez and Laredo are both called the Monte Carlo of Mexico. There are columns in the press devoted to tales of their wickedness. There is said to be a large sale of cocaine and opium and that many young people are under the influence of these drugs. As for alcoholic drink there is no question but that in Juarez excessive quantities are taken. There has been much boot-legging on a large and petty scale. So many night excursions by aeroplane have been made by Americans that the Mexican Government has equipped an aerial fleet to police the frontier. Government Prohibition agents of the United States have recommended that Mexico be asked to consent to the establishment of a "Dry Zone" all along the border. President Obregon, when asked about this, said "Mexico would welcome the establishment of such a zone,

as he felt it was humiliating that Americans unable to satisfy their vicious cravings in America should come to Mexico to do so." This, however, Obregon probably did not mean to be taken seriously. Like many other Mexican politicians, he loves making witty remarks at the expense of America.

In connection with the American idea of control of the border may be mentioned the resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the legislature of Arizona, requesting the President of the United States to start negotiations for the purchase, lease, or joint control of two hundred miles of the said border. But that is not so much to further "Prohibition" as to further trade; the people of Arizona seeking an outlet, a sort of Salonika on the Gulf of California. They would like the frontier of Arizona to run due west from the town of Nogales to the sea.

Nogales is going to be an important point in the approach to Mexico from the north. There is a railway which was wrecked during the revolutionary period. It ran between the Sierra Madre and the ocean, and was the only railroad development of the Gulf of California and the Pacific Coast for a thousand miles. It was not finished—but now, I believe, the Southern Pacific Company, who possess the franchise, have been enabled to repair the damage and will soon run a service of trains from Arizona and California to Guadalajara. It should be said that Californians have naturally a much deeper interest in the American development of Mexico than most States. Financial

groups have lately taken over large tracts of land near Tehuantepec and also in the State of Vera Cruz. California has as vigorous an attitude toward Mexico on the western side as Texas has on the east. California's destiny seems to hold the commercial domination of the Pacific Coast.

There is another grand railroad project on foot, the "*Gran Ferrocarril Panamericano*," which is to join New York with the Canal Zone of Panama by a permanent way through Mexico, Guatemala, etc. The establishment of this pan-American railway depends, however, more upon the Central American Republics than on Mexico. A thousand miles of this road remains to be built, over land much subject to earthquakes and revolutions. But the through carriages now running from Chicago to Mexico City *via* Laredo are a symptom of closer railroad connections.

I did not, however, enter by Laredo or Nogales, but by El Paso. The distance to Mexico City is nearly two thousand kilometres, mostly of sand and piñon trees. The Santa Fe country seems to extend endlessly southward. Desert dust enters the train and almost stifles you. From the window of the railway carriage you see the yucca's withered stem, and the dead cactus extends to you a dusty hand, welcoming you to No-man's-land. The contours of the mountains are as in New Mexico, wind-worked, wind-shaped, and there are great rounded hats of rock, grey and sun-wasted. Occasionally one comes to wretched mud-built villages, whose whole population turns

out in rags to sell coffee and chili sandwiches to passengers at the halting-places.

Three hundred miles south of El Paso the wilderness is broken by Chihuahua, of which Cunninghame Graham used to write, fondly pronounced Chihoo-a-hoo-a in London, but locally Chi-wah-wah. I broke my journey in this city and enjoyed the refreshment of spirit which comes when suddenly you escape from winter and change one country grown familiar for one which is unfamiliar.

Chihuahua, capital of one of the "United States of Mexico," is a fine city, or the ruins of one. Not so deep as Pompeii, yet it lies well under the dirt. War and revolution have battered it. Mud has swept over its street car lines. Economically it seems to be a peon of the United States. American goods alone are in the shops and at prices fifty or a hundred per cent higher than in America itself. Even food such as butter and sugar and cheese and bacon seems to be largely imported and heavily taxed. There is much poverty and want.

But what a spacious city it is! The gardens are fresh and flowering with violets. Fountains are playing. The tradition of Spain is strong in the architecture, which expresses the dignity of human life—and of being a Spaniard.

Alas, the most striking characteristic of the city is, I suppose, characteristic of all Mexico, and that is the pearl and ivory-mounted revolvers. There are shop-windows full of pistols. Every other man has a pistol in his hip-pocket. Pistols

are discharged at all moments for joy, or to kill, or through mere ennui. The Mexicans fire off pistols to kill time.

The city seems to have two regular restaurants, and you either dine with Quong or dine with Sing. The city band plays in front of Porfirio Diaz's Palacio Nacional every afternoon. At the other end of the city you may watch soldiers drilling, though hardly in the style of the Guards. In the evening there is nothing to do except watch "barnstormers" do an English musical comedy or look at an American picture-show. On Sunday, it is true, there is always, at least in winter, a bull-fight. These are not dressed as in Spain, though flower-decked bowers are put up for the "Queens of love and beauty," the presiding "most distinguished ladies." Probably when famous toreadors visit Chihuahua they wear their crimson and gold, but in the glimpse I had of the killing of a sixth bull the fighters were just men with their coats off—as it were the butcher had taken a holiday from his shop and with his long knife was taking extra pleasure in the darker side of his trade. The crowd kept calling to him to lead the bull away and bring out an ass. And blushing he eyed the spot in the bull's back where the knife ought to go and made the last lunge. "He is not a bull-fighter; he's just an ordinary man," said some one as he went away.

The State of Chihuahua has many bandits; life there is remarkably insecure compared with north of the Rio Grande. This is not entirely

due to Mexicans; there are not a few wild Americans at large. Hundreds of men wanted by the American police have in time past crowded into the State of Chihuahua, there to live largely by their wits. "Two-gun Bill" of cinema fame may be met with if you ride from the city to the mine with gold. Political assassins and men of blood are produced naturally by the conditions. Thus the life of General Villa and his eventual murder were natural enough.

The horsemen of Chihuahua are much better mounted than the cowboys of the American South-West—one may spend a pleasant afternoon on the Town Hall steps merely watching the horsemen riding in and out of town. And they are better armed and naturally more ready with hand to holster.

The State was governed by General Enriquez, a Mexican Liberal who has since resigned—but he had little control of the wild people about him. He had to cope with large numbers who believe they have won revolutionary reforms, and with land-owning families who are accustomed to treat the rest like slaves. Poor people still call you "patron" instead of "señor." Enriquez staved off the demand for the splitting up and division of the large estates. He protected many business concerns from spoliatory Labour laws; but he allowed the rule of daily payment of wages, a point much fought in the south. General Enriquez, who speaks English, is probably wider in his sympathies than most Mexicans. Wilfrid Ewart asked him the question direct—What did he

think of the prospect of annexation by America? He replied that in his opinion the political ideals of America made that impossible.

But if the wild forces now loose in Mexico should overthrow all the civilised elements of life? There hides the possible moment of an effective American intervention.

I have not been surprised to read subsequently that the reason for Enriquez's resignation was in despair. Four days in Chihuahua is not long enough to judge of the whole of the State, but any visitor might be struck by the daring faces of the Spaniards and by the almost complete savagery of the Indians. The latter, the Tarahumare, are black and nearly naked. They wear gigantic straw sombreros, and their bodies below are, as it were, triangled. Broad brows, sun-stretched eyes, broad nose but pointed chin—their faces are triangular. Their bodies from shoulders to navel are black triangles, their loin cloths hang in a triangle of dull rags, their thighs from the fullness of their loins to gaunt bony knees—two more triangles of dark dirt—and then wasted feet with mud-caked separate toes. A strange people these Indians, for they worship the Echino cactus and make sacrifice to it. The other citizens of this great State worship not the cactus but the revolver.

As I resumed my journey southward over hundreds more miles of desert I noted that the man next to me kept a loaded revolver on the couch beside him—ready in case of bandidos. It is a wild country—what do the foreigners go



there for? Well, mostly for gold—for a fortune to be quickly won.

We had had some hope of meeting Wilfrid Ewart at Chihuahua. But he had left before we came. We found his signature in the register of the Hotel Robinson. We had gone to a little Spanish hotel in the Plaza called the San Luis. It seemed as if his ten days would be over before we reached Mexico City. After Torreon we began to watch for Laredo trains, not knowing that the railroad branches off at a much earlier point, Huehuetoca. It would have been amusing and pleasant to have shaken hands at some little station where our trains, going in different directions, were drawn up and steaming. But, as it happened, he had not left the capital.

In the train were several mining men, mostly Americans. One came up to me and said, "I saw you at the Hotel Sheldon and I said to my friend—'He's a mud-digger, I'll bet.' " There, however, he was mistaken; but if you are English and in Mexico it stands to reason you must be in the mining interest. The talk was of gold and opals and silver. Indians brought all manner of jewellery to the trains to sell, much of it manufactured stuff imported from Europe. They brought, also, lustrous pots which were more genuine, and peasant embroideries and boxes of sweetened cream and baskets of strawberries. At Irapuato on the 26th December the whole station swarmed with vendors of strawberries. They say it always does, any time in the year.

The train emerged from the waterless sand on

to the maguey plantations. The eyes rested gratefully on the green plumes of the banana palm and on the scarlet flowers of some tropical tree. The bougainvillaea bounced into a crimson effulgence of bloom. We entered at last a rich and verdant country fed by many rivers, and that was Anahuac, the fertile land of the Aztec Empire, of which the city now called Mexico, but in their day Tenochtitlan, is and was the capital.

### III. AT MONTEZUMA'S CAPITAL

HERE the event happened which saddened the year: my friend was killed. Wilfrid Ewart, to whose genius and person I was devoted, and who in turn was very fond of us, was shot on Old Year's Night, a lamentable taking off, over which one can never cease to grieve.

Arrived at Mexico City my wife and I sped along the Avenue Juarez to the Hotel Cosmos, where we spent a night. Next day we repaired to the quieter and more comfortable Iturbide, a fine old structure built round stone courts and a garden of palm trees and flowering shrubs, with a fountain playing. I think we were fortunate, for while we paid only a moderate price, we yet had a large airy room with writing-desk and table and a pleasant outlook on the unfurling green of the banana palms. By no possibility could we have been shot from the street whilst standing at the window.

We wondered much whether Wilfrid Ewart were in the city. Although I knew he had only ten days wherein his ticket would be valid, I knew the temptation there was to stay longer. There is one perfectly safe and conventional hotel in Mexico City, and that is the Regis, run

in the American style and patronised chiefly by Americans and English. Its touts circulate on the Pullman cars of the trains and make sure of the English-speaking passengers. A hotel omnibus meets all trains and takes off guests for the hotel. We felt sure, therefore, that Ewart would have stayed there. So on our first morning we went thither and asked for him. He was not there. We consulted the register. He had not been there. Next day I called on Mr. Norman King, the British Consul-General, but the consulate had not heard of him. Dr. E. J. Dillon and his wife had, however, arrived in the city and were staying at the Princess, but Ewart was not registered at the Princess. We wondered where he could have stayed. As a matter of fact a Spaniard on the train had given him the address of a hotel several streets distant from the centre—the Hotel Isabel on the Street of the Republic of San Salvador, a hotel chiefly patronised by Germans and Spanish.

On Friday the 29th December we went to the shrine of "Our Lady of Guadalupe," and saw that famous image worshipped more by the Indians than by any other. We watched the Aztecs of to-day, candle in one hand, sombrero in the other, walk on their knees up the aisle to the altar, and looked on those grandiose ecclesiastical pictures which adorn the gilded church telling the story of the revelation of the Virgin and the Pope's remark: "Such things are not done for all nations." We recalled to mind December 12, the festival of the Guadalupe Virgin and the

resonance of it at Santa Fe among the Mexicans there, the firing of guns promiscuously in the streets, the lighting of festive fires. It had much astonished Wilfrid Ewart then.

Next day, the 30th, at noontide we met our friend by chance on the streets of the city. It was on the corner of San Juan de Latran and the street of the 16th September. We were in the act of choosing at which new restaurant we would partake of luncheon, and we suddenly saw Ewart's tall figure on the edge of the curb, and he was gazing in his short-sighted way up into the sky and did not see us till I cried out.

Then we moved joyfully together to a restaurant and had lunch.

"Well, Wilfrid Ewart, you are a wicked fellow!" I said to him reproachfully.

He ruffled a little.

"Well, I don't know," said he. "Isn't it the chance of a lifetime? I've been looking for a place like this all my life."

He seemed utterly charmed with Mexico City and spoke with a sort of rapture of Chapultepec Park. We agreed to go together on the morrow to San Angel to have lunch together on the last day of the year at the fine inn there. It was a place nine or ten miles from the centre of the city, literally buried in flowers and palms, and he seriously thought of taking a room at the inn and staying there for three months.

One thing troubled him, that iron box of regimental papers and his portmanteau had gone to New Orleans; he carried only his knapsack

and staff, like a pilgrim bound for a distant shrine. He could sacrifice his unused ticket, but how get these pieces of baggage forwarded to Mexico? We went after luncheon to talk to the railway agent about it, but the office was closed for the New Year holidays.

I then accompanied him to his hotel and saw the English-speaking German who kept it; "surprisingly civil," said Ewart; "trying to ingratiate himself with me," I thought. I went up to his room and admired the fine view of the mountains obtained from his window, but I did not care for the feeling of it—not a place to write in. I meditated getting him to change over to the Iturbide.

Next day, the 31st of December, we sat on a street-car and went out together to San Angel. We had lunch in view of the great mountains Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, but their summits remained wreathed in cloud. A fine warm air blew steadily thence, ruffling the blossoms of the garden, disturbing the eyes. Our luncheon was spread in an arbour. We were waited on by a French waiter. It was hardly a democratic resort. There were other arbours and tables set in a shady *patio* where rich Mexicans, who had driven up in their cars, dissected elegantly cooked sole and turkey and strawberries and cream washed down with imported wines. The straw-hatted, blanket-wrapped Mexicans, the descendants of the Aztecs, the women with gold ornaments on their necks and ears and flowing raven hair were hidden from view here. One might very well

have been on the Riviera — except for those gigantic volcanoes and a certain dryness of the table-mountain air which spoke not of the sea.

Ewart had already been to the inn several times. He had been ill at ease in American civilisation, and told us so. He thirsted for the elegance of Paris and the easy-going ways of London. "One thing the Americans have not yet learned to prize, and that is leisureliness," said he. His own marked leisured utterance was strangely in contrast with the rapid speech and style of Americans.

Yet he was going back to America in the spring. He felt the fascination of modern America as much as any one. He was surprised that America had not yet annexed Mexico. Ideal considerations did not weigh in his mind. The only argument in favour of Mexico was that Mexico was unlike the United States and it might be worth while conserving her as something different.

Of them and many things we discoursed during a long afternoon spent mostly on the roof of the San Angel inn. And in the dusk of evening we took a returning tram to Mexico. As we passed the bull-ring at Chapultepec the outcoming crowds swarmed on to the streets, and ere we reached the city the newsboys with the evening papers came clamorously on to the cars crying: "Glorious afternoon with the bulls! Great triumph of Rodolfo Gaon! Great triumph of Lalanda!" Gaon is an Indian bull-fighter and the idol of Mexico for a time. Ewart had seen him kill four

bulls in his garments of gold and silver, and was hideously impressed. But he was greatly tickled by the news-cry: "Glorious afternoon with the bulls!" and kept repeating it.

That evening we went together to the Teatro Lirico to see a revue called "1922." We sat in the midst of a wild crowd and looked on at something of which we did not understand very much, allusions of all kinds to happenings in the Republic of Mexico during 1922, danced out by girls and clowns in coloured silks. There were acts representing the two years' peace of the Obregon regime, Liberty, the Graves of the Martyrs of the Revolution, and through it all there stalked a hooligan, drunk in every scene and creating a scandal in every part. In the graveyard of the heroes he made love to the widow grieving over her dead husband, and was only interrupted when the grave opened and the dead man inside roared a terrible reproof—the thrill of the evening. The whole ended on a sort of parade of the Republic and a rivalry of flags, over which in a grand burst of the National Anthem triumphed the Red, White, and Green of the Mexican nation.

By the time we came out of the theatre it had become a wild night in Mexico City. Every one who had a car had brought it out. All the "camions" were filled with joy-riders, every klaxon and horn was yelling, the side-walks were packed with thronging crowds carrying coloured paper flags and other baubles. Most of the men had pistols, some had guns. Promiscuous firing rattled and banged in side streets and about house-



tops. The cafés were full. Orchestras were playing. Men everywhere were under the influence of pulque and other cactus alcohols. I think we felt rather tired. Certainly we were ready for supper, and we sought a table where we might sit down to eat and finish the night.

It was at the Cosmos that we sat down to supper—for the last time. There we lingered, and would no doubt have seen the Old Year out, the New Year in, but an unkind Fate prompted otherwise. At half-past eleven or thereabout we sallied forth once more into the wild streets. I had a mind to go to the great central square, the Zocalo, where once stood the Great Pyramid, but we did not agree to go. Instead we gave one another last greetings and departed to our several hotels.

“A happy New Year!” Ewart cried, swaying his arm affectionately in a last handshake.

“A happy New Year!” said I. “And may you soon get that iron box,” I added, involuntarily thinking of what was most on our minds.

So we parted. Even the Iturbide was in a strange condition, most of the servants being in that menacing drunken state which comes after drinking much pulque. But that was small matter. At midnight there outbroke a quintupled clamour over all the city. Hundreds of thousands of revolvers and guns must have been discharged and discharged repeatedly. The sound was of a great general engagement in war. I stood at the window and looked at the dark

sky, which, however, told nothing of the myriads of bullets flying into it. I was astonished. But little did I guess that Wilfrid Ewart, doing the same at his window overlooking that wild street of the " Republic of San Salvador," was in these moments being killed—by a revolver bullet from below.

Yet so it was, and I will not say more here, except that we buried him in the British Cemetery beside the Tlacopan Causeway along which Cortes and the remains of his defeated army slowly retreated on the *Noche Triste* of July 1, 1520. A few English people stood beside a new-dug grave with tearful eyes and choking hearts. So we laid him to rest far away from his home. There were white roses buried with him. There are lilies growing near him.

I should not perhaps have narrated this happening here but that Wilfrid Ewart has become part of Mexico as Francis Drake became part of Nombre de Dios and the Spanish Main. It was Mexico that took him, sacrificing yet another victim on its Aztec altars. On the day after we buried Ewart another Englishman was killed, George W. Steabben, the English merchant. He was walking along a street with his family when suddenly a shooting affray took place between two parties of Mexicans in cars. Shots went in many directions, several people were wounded, and Steabben was killed. And the quarrelling parties were mostly officers and deputies—really above the law. Members of the Mexican Parliament

enjoy immunity from arrest and they are nevertheless frequently implicated in crimes and outrages.

The social condition of Mexico has evidently greatly changed since Diaz's days. Porfirio Diaz ruled as a Dictator for a quarter of a century and enforced peace upon the country. He was the type of great man that Carlyle sought in history, the hero once found to be obeyed. The obedience to Diaz was very gratifying to foreigners in Mexico. His fame was extraordinary in his day. But now none so poor as do him reverence. His name is not heard. Streets are not named after him nor monuments raised to him. His name represents bondage and oppression to the masses.

The ten years of civil war and revolution which followed the Diaz regime were no doubt strongly coloured by the personal ambitions of aspirants to the Presidency. But the violence of them came from a popular upheaval, a rising out of the depths. What has happened in Mexico is not unakin to what has happened in Russia.

The Mexican revolution began before the success of the Bolsheviks, but it obtained a powerful inspiration from Russia. Mexican politicians came to Europe to study Bolshevism, and in one or two States, notably those of Vera Cruz and Yucatan, it can be said that a dictatorship of the proletariat has been achieved. Bourgeois society and the enormous capitalistic concerns of Mexico are menaced by proletarianism.

The force of the law has been greatly weakened by this revolutionary triumph. Every Mexican

feels that he is a law to himself and that he must be ready to protect himself should he be set upon. Hence the prevalence of firearms in the possession of citizens—and the many assaults, murders, accidents.

I suppose in no other capital in the world, not even in Russia, could a funeral cortege of a dead Communist be followed by banners inscribed "Viva Anarchia—Long live Anarchy!" Nor could a tram-strike such as we had this January end in an armed battle in the streets and nobody be punished.

There is much that is remarkable about Mexico City. It is an Indian capital, a Spanish capital, and an American capital in one. All three clash, producing a city of strange unrest. The Americans want only business, the Spanish believe they want culture, the Indians only want freedom. Spanish and Indians together make up the Mexican people, which on the whole is mentally deficient. They are loquacious and lose themselves talking. When they take to arms they do so without mathematics. Impregnable as Mexico seems, any civilised nation could defeat her in war—because, to use a colloquialism, "she is not all there." That is why, in my opinion, in the first place Cortes with his handful of warriors was able to destroy the Aztec Empire. The Aztecs had a fourth part lacking in their mental equipment. Montezuma, magnificent as he was, was clearly, from a European point of view, something of a half-wit. That half-wittedness the Spaniards married gaily into and have not been able to

throw it off. The conqueror has become the conquered.

Mexico is a city of some enchantment. It is not a place that can be understood at once—like Manchester or Chicago. It holds you, puzzled. The squads of arum lilies, the joyous fountains playing under ever-green trees, the prattling children, and the noonday tropical sun do not entirely give the mood of the city. It is not one of innocence.

Or again, the busy American and English business men, the gay modish shops of the Avenida Madero, the foyer of "the most exclusive" American hotel, or the buzz of English talk from mining men and drummers in Sanborn's café—they also do not convey the mood of the old Aztec capital. Its air of modern business is deceptive.

The day-time activities seem to be a veil of the real city. It is in many respects very pleasant by day, more pleasant for the business people than for any one else I think. At night the city is different. The sense of security is less, the feeling of the presence of the unknown is much greater.

The underworld of the city is terrible, and no student of life could shut his eyes to it—poverty widespread and staring; a morose drunken male population, women who suffer more than most poor women—every one morose, melancholy; fierce threatening faces much commoner than smiling ones.

There is a thin upper crust of rich people, very thin and rather rich, who own fine villas and have

their cars. And their womenfolk *dress* and parade in the motor-car parade, which at a certain hour continually blocks the way on the Avenida Madero, whilst their chauffeurs with their horns shriek importance to the traffic police. These people shop at the fine shops and pay three prices for American goods, forgoing their own Mexican foods and manufactured ware for expensive imports. The real Mexican population is herded into a district called by Americans the Thieves' Market, a great open place where the Aztecs used to exercise themselves. And there you may see the women lined up in scores, holding in their hands chili sandwiches, all they have to sell, and supplicating you to buy. In their faces you see something of the mood of the city.

When Cortes came he found a stately city. He found also a place of gloom and awe, a city of slavery, of human sacrifice, of fanatical unbending paganism. His brutal adventurous four hundred tasted there the greatest fear of their lives, and met of course in one battle the greatest disaster that Spanish arms ever met at Indian hands. At that time the greatest feature of the city was the grand square of the Pyramid, which is now called the Zocalo and has become the terminus of all the swirling street-cars and of hundreds of pirate-buses. There, eight great causeways approached a grand open place, the centre of which was the stone-faced pyramid, the altar of Huitzilopochtli, god of war. The pyramid was cemented, its base was conglomerated with jade, emerald, and gold, and for that reason

was picked to bits by Spanish soldiers. Not one stone remained *in situ* when the Christian cathedral was started to be built. On top of the pyramid stood the gigantic sacrificial stone, now in a museum hard by, and into the cavity in the middle of the stone were flung thousands of warm hearts, still beating in death. Did not the barbarity of the Aztec rituals go far to justify the brutality of Cortes's followers?

One night, the *Noche Triste* of July 1, 1520, Cortes saw his own Spaniards led to ghastly sacrifice, whilst hundreds of sacred fires lit up the sides and stone stairways and platforms of this pyramid and shone luridly on the faces of the priests and the Spanish victims and the ecstatic Indians. That marked the end of Montezuma's reign. That great square is all encroached on now by shops and wretched arcades, and instead of the pyramid a squat cathedral, trying as it were to cover an original ground-plan of paganism without any architectural plan. Half the open space has gone. Groves of low electric light standards supplied by an American foundry shed unnecessary glimmer on petty garden plots—and all the grandeur has gone.

Nevertheless, somehow at night the gloom and ancient horror of the square creeps out. Aztec beggars, half-Aztecs, quarter-Aztecs, shades of Aztecs, make for you threateningly and yet supplicatingly. Pulque-stricken men stare at you from their doped eye-sockets. The eight streets are there, ill-lit, full of darkness, noise, and beggars. The drivers and the hangers-on of the

pirate-buses yell their destinations — Takk-uba, Rom-a, Pi-e-dad, Sa-nangel. In churches in the gloom you may see converted Indians creep from the door to the altar on their knees. Outside the churches beggars are seen kneeling in silence, their lean faces and fevered eyes set as it were upon some star. They kneel and stare, hour after hour, and it seems nothing to them who passes by or what they receive in alms. There is something of the spirit of Quahpopoca and Cauhtemoc whom the Spanish burned over slow fires, who fixed their eyes upon a point and burned and did not say a word.

What is truly remarkable is that no ten minutes passes in the night without the sound somewhere of a gun-shot, a revolver-shot. To the violent street-crowds shooting in air is an amusement. You walk carefully and circumspectly in the streets at night. It is true, of course, that they killed my friend here, and it preys on the mind. But to me Mexico City refuses to correspond to any type of civilisation. It is still the city of the Pyramid of Huitzilopochtli.



## IV. IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CORTES

### I. CORTES

YUCATAN, the site of the ruins of the Maya civilisation, was the first part of Mexico to be discovered, for it was the point of the mainland nearest to the Indies. De Cordova visited it in 1516-17; Juan de Grijalva called there in 1518, and going farther searched the coast of the Gulf for islets. He was recalled and dishonoured, though it is recorded that he was a most honourable man. Honour among pirates is no saving virtue. Cortes followed him, and he had the craft and style to play hero or villain as occasion offered. The Spanish wanted gold; they did not want glory, least of all any one else's glory. Cortes, however, had as great an eye for glory as he had for gold. That he was a great man few who read his history can doubt. He had to fight not only the Indians but the headstrong Spaniards of his own following, the malevolent Velasquez, Governor of Cuba, who had control of his supplies, and even enemies in far-off Spain, who hid his glories from the Emperor.

How he resigned his office and got himself elected by his own troops, how he persuaded

them to burn their boats so that there could be no return, how he reinforced his army by capturing an army sent against him, how he beguiled Montezuma and fooled him—is a great story, revealing a character which it might have delighted Shakespeare to describe.

But what Cortes was and what he and his followers achieved are two different matters. The brilliance of the exploits of Cortes has blinded many to the sordid material nature of the deeds effected. It is true he cast down a thousand altars of blood and washed away the hideous scarlet stain, putting up white crosses with flowers and Madonnas to whom could be no reproach. But there the ideal side of the adventure ended. The rest was vulgar spoliation, the furtherance of one quest only, the making of a fortune to take back to Spain.

Before Cortes's expedition no one had surmised the wealth of Mexico. The Spanish of the Indies wasted their time, kidnapping natives and selling them to the slavers, not knowing that El Dorado was just a little farther out of doors. But Cortes readily grasped that there were rich kingdoms to sack. He founded Vera Cruz with the name "Rich City of the True Cross." He marched to meet the Totonacs at Cempoalla and found a people who wore golden necklaces and bracelets and rings of gold, gems in their noses and ears, head-dresses of gold. Spanish eyes stared sultrily at these ornaments on the persons of a tribe who were friends. Some must have wished the Totonacs were enemies.

The fame of Mexico City determined Cortes to march toward it. Health lay in that direction. For a mountain-wall had to be scaled, and even a day's march took the army out of the fever flats of Vera Cruz. He climbed up to Jalapa, the city of flowers, and thence to the heights of the plateau where at Xocotlan he found thirteen high temples and pyramids made of tens of thousands of human skulls. The Totonacs accompanied him all the way, for they told of another tribe which might ally itself with Cortes, the Tlascaltecs, who had constantly fought the Aztecs and never been beaten by them. The Tlascaltecs fought Cortes first to see what his troops were made of—and nearly worsted him. But afterwards, having tested him and liked him, they became his best and most lasting friends. Through them, more than through his own Spaniards or through help of God, he won. A month after he left the shore Cortes entered Tlaxcala and was given a marvellous flower festival.

Thence Cortes marched to the pious Cholultecs at the Pyramid of Cholula and massacred them, and then he built a causeway over the collar which holds the two volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, and marched by Izcalpan and Ayotzinco to the lakes and canals of the Valley of Mexico. From Iztapalapan, now at the end of a tramway, he marched to the great meeting of welcome with Montezuma and his nobles.

## II. VERA CRUZ

Mexico City had become haunted for us since Wilfrid Ewart's death, and we were glad when occasion offered to go down to the lower country, to Vera Cruz and the historical country between that city and the capital. Up and down these heights soldiers have constantly streamed in battle. It is Mexico's fighting ground, scene of her victories and of her defeats.

Of the port of Vera Cruz, the old Villa Rica, I will say little except that it has become a place of great commercial and military importance. It is not so great a port as Habana or New Orleans, but it is clearly capable of development to a point of rivalry with these. With all her great seaboard Mexico is nevertheless greatly deficient in natural harbours. The Pacific side is even poorer than the Atlantic side. For that reason Vera Cruz ought to have an enormous trade.

Strategically also, an attacking force is somewhat dependent on Vera Cruz. It is the obvious base for an invading army. Cortes started thence in 1520, the Americans in 1846, the French in 1860, and in the abortive war of 1913-14 it was occupied by the American marines. The revolutionary campaign of 1923-24 began there also. The Great War showed how it could be easily defended—by mines, but I doubt if the Mexicans have enough intelligence to apply the lessons of the War to the defence of their own country. The Turks learned the use of mines in Asia Minor and at will cleared Smyrna of foreign ships. But the

Mexicans are less intelligent than the Turks, less capable of defending themselves against foes.

During the American occupation of 1913-14 a great work of sanitation and cleansing was carried out, and the city has never been again the pest-hole it was. Some of the scavenging then begun has been carried on. There is a notable decrease in fevers and plague. Yellow fever, for which it had a very evil name, has almost disappeared. It is worth noting that wherever the American army has been sent to keep order or to take possession the general physical health of the community has been benefited.

Vera Cruz now, under a revolutionary administration, is not a pleasant city for visitors. "Make the Foreigner Pay" is applied by all and sundry to those who have to pass through the port, for business or pleasure. Porters, hotels, shops are all operated on this plan, and it defeats itself, for no one stays in the city longer than he can help.

The whole State suffers from economic disorganisation, personal greed, sloth, and violence. Against this strive many American and British and German companies. If there is anything clean or practical or prepossessing, it derives from these countries. It is easy to grasp that if these companies were forced to retreat, the Spanish-speaking community would revert to the primitive state.

It is a very Indian State, though Negro blood is mixed in on the coast as it is not in the interior. Negroes in company with Jews and Moors have

generally been excluded from Mexico. But at Vera Cruz and Tampico and Puerto Mexico there has naturally been some admixture. The Indian mentality has triumphed, but it is weak. The favourite buffoonery of the natives when Cortes called on them to surrender and they refused, was to cry out: "We shall eat you with chili to-morrow. We believe you will taste well." To-day modern civilisation is in the place of Cortes and still it challenges the Mexicans and they cry out: "We'll have you with chili."

### III. THE CITY OF JALAP

Cortes marched up to it from the sea. Montezuma's messengers met him with golden ducks, discs of the sun in gold, large stones of jade, gifts of plumed armour and golden arrows, and they prayed him to go away. Jalapa was the chief city of the Totonac Indians—it was a city of flowers; there were silver houses there. There were blood altars. Cortes said: No, he would not go away till he had delivered in person a message which he bore from the King of Spain. That message he invented; but he had a message, nevertheless, obtained out of the book of Fate, and in due time he delivered it. His message dissolved the Aztec empire and laid low the greatest cultural achievement of the Indians. Anahuac became New Spain.

Four hundred years have just passed since that conquest was achieved, but the Mexicans have not marked it with festivity. Cortes's bones have

been driven from cathedral to cathedral and his memory become unhallowed.

Jalapa, famous for centuries for the export of jalap, is to-day very different from anything it ever was in the past. It is the capital of a Bolshevik State. Nowhere during the ten years' revolutionary struggle which followed the fall of Diaz did the proletariat gain more control than in the State of Vera Cruz, and Jalapa is its capital. It should be understood that the United States of Mexico are very much disunited in politics. In five or six of them, such as Tlaxcala, there are actually two legislatures, old and new regime, trying to sit at the same time. But it is safe to say that the majority in all Mexico is Radical and very decidedly anti-capitalistic. Where the distribution of the land among the peasants has not been carried out there are continual armed raids. The Mexican land-owners and bourgeois are busily organising a Fascisti movement, but that has little chance of success unless the President of the Republic favoured them. Obregon, however, is an enigmatical personage. He is anti-capitalist, but he is ready with Federal troops to quell riots of the proletariat, or rebellions led by ambitious generals. His popularity with the masses has waned, but his ability to govern is considerable. The trial of his strength comes between now and the 1924 elections. Obregon almost had promise of filling the shoes of Diaz. As he departs from power the revolution in its fury may easily consume the country once again.

Jalapa, in which we spent some ten days, is

a city of "Red" demonstrations. The "Agrarians" and the Co-operatists parade with their blood-red banners and violent inscriptions. They occupy the Town Hall or the Governor's Palace, and their leaders harangue the crowds from the balconies; the Governor himself lends a hand. Men with red flags climb the steeple of the cathedral, and whenever a strong break of oratory is made from the Town Hall balcony below, they ring the cathedral bells with a grand clash.

What is the matter? The workmen of the Maritime Zone have boycotted the El Aguila Oil Company, on which depend for fuel all the railways of the south and most of the factories. Half Mexico is in danger of economic paralysis. It was so all the winter of 1922-23. The Company, an English one, was holding out against a proposed seventy-five per cent increase in wages, wages to be paid daily, premiums on dismissal, etc. Wages paid daily is a great feature of the Labour demand, the idea being to make it more easy to go on strike.

There has also been a no-rent campaign, whole populations refusing to pay rent. When in Vera Cruz you decide no longer to pay rent, you hang out a red flag from your window. There is also here, as in most of the States, a strained relationship between the Indian peasants and their former masters the land-owners.

Against Red rule the newspapers of Mexico have arrayed themselves, especially *Excelsior*, Mr. Lloyd George's Mexican platform, and *El Dictamen*, both run in favour of capitalism and



“common sense.” But one of the latest phenomena has been the boycott of these papers in the Maritime Zone, largely organised by the Governor of Vera Cruz himself.

It is lucky for the people of Jalapa that the currency of Mexico is federally controlled and is of gold and silver. Otherwise one can imagine the inflation of paper money that would take place in a State run on the lines of that of Vera Cruz. As it is, the disorganisation caused by strikes has raised the cost of living to almost double that of the quieter States of Oaxaca and Puebla.

How important this condition of affairs is may be judged from the fact that Vera Cruz is the key of the Republic. Mexico has been three times conquered and its capital taken, by Spain, by the United States, and by France; and all three campaigns started from Vera Cruz. Did not the American soldiers in 1848 play baseball in Jalapa with the President of Mexico's wooden leg? That was the time of one-legged Santa Ana. Now is the time of one-armed Obregon. Despite the great army of Mexico to-day, one cannot help feeling that in case of foreign intervention *via* Vera Cruz and Jalapa there would not be enough moral power to resist invasion.

Still, whatever happens, there is one thing in which Jalapa will not change, never has changed; that is, in the grandeur of her scenery. The city is unfortunately often in the clouds, and warm rolling mists enwrap its stoneways and houses,

whilst jackdaws innumerable create an unearthly hubbub in the twilight. But when the clouds vanish the landscape appears. The mountains lift themselves in great steps to Himalayan heights. Jalapa is on a ledge five thousand feet above the sea—she is half-way up the Sierra Madre. And above her, above all her clouds, stands Orizaba, twenty thousand feet high, which great snow-crowned mountain has often been called the guardian spirit of Mexico. Orizaba watches the sea, and should she see approaching gods or men she passes word to Popocatepetl, the guardian of the capital. Orizaba must have passed on many messages in her time, though not with much avail.

#### IV. AT TLAXCALA

Tlaxcala surely is the most romantic place in Mexico, the little mountain city whence Cortes gleaned his greatest allies, an Indian Sparta. The Tlascaltecs displayed a devotion to the Spaniards which in its unthinking generosity was very characteristic of the Indians. At a word from Malinche, as they affectionately called him, they even changed their religion and consented to be baptized. They never foresaw how the Spaniards in victory would prove ungrateful. They reinforced Cortes in thousands and went with him to Cholula. The Cholultecs hated them, and while pretending to receive Cortes amiably, demanded that the Tlascaltecs camp outside and not inside their city bounds. When

with his allies Cortes fell upon the Cholultecs it was natural that the insulted Tlascaltecs did great execution, had in fact eventually to be restrained. The Highlanders of Tlaxcala spared neither breath nor spoil. They were almost as avid in victory as the Spaniards themselves. But a nod from Cortes was enough to hold them in check. They gladly followed his horses and men to Montezuma and made no small show of danger to the hated Aztecs. The Aztecs were the imperialists of their days, oppressing all the lower races, but unable to quell the Tlascaltecs. Tlaxcala, therefore, marched against Montezuma. And when Cortes on the "Dreadful Night" was beaten Tlaxcala still stood by him, enabling him to return to the field and win.

You approach Tlaxcala by narrow lanes all fenced with candelabra cactus. This cactus, branching near its root, grows in green pillars as regularly as the stems of a branched candlestick. Sometimes it is called the "organ" cactus from its likeness in shape to organ pipes. These pipes or pillars grow close to one another to a height of six or seven feet when young, often to twenty feet when matured. They make the simplest and most effective of palings, for their barbs forbid any one struggling to get through them. The old stoneways of Tlaxcala, worn by myriads of bare feet of Indians, are now hedged with this cactus, and you walk from the old fields up to what were once citadels, temples, palaces, now in shapeless ruin and over-heaped with mould and overgrown with flowers. You may sit up there

among the mountains and muse on what was Tlaxcala.

Eight thousand feet up, the ancient city was higher than the new one. And it was much larger. Tlaxcala has decayed. It supported the sturdy warriors and their families of pure Tlascaltec origin. Seemingly the half-Spanish breed is idler, lazier, and has not taken kindly to a bleak site of civilisation and life. The windy city is cold and poor. Its chief life is in its soldiery, who make of it a stamping ground.

The drums and fifes make a great clangour in the stone-walled echoing city; a hubbub which does not cease all day. The soldiers march well on the cobbles and certainly make a smart turn-out. One's sympathies are with them and with Mexico until a plain-clothes colonel with riding-whip comes on the scene and flogs the soldiers as they march. That brutality immediately alienates one's affections. Surprising that the soldiers stand it—after the revolution! But they are bound in the traditions of peonage. Disaffection takes longer to breed in them than it has done in the ex-serfs of Russia.

The most remarkable objects in Tlaxcala are, however, in the churches. There you may see the large stone font in which Xicotencatl, the old general, and all the leading Indians consented to be baptized in 1520. In their nakedness and with the rites of the Catholic Church the mind can visualise a remarkable scene. The old pulpit whence, after they were baptized, they were preached at in Spanish is also there and *in situ*.

And you may see the first pictures of their new Gods, the first pictures of Christ and the Madonna as specially painted by Cortes's men and sent as gifts to the first Christian chapel of the Indians. These are appalling in their ugliness. The ugliness of Death has been added to the ugliness of madness, and together in one face something has been obtained worthy of fear. No loving Saviour was presented to the Tlascaltecs, but a worse boggy than their own. Their god of war was ugly and authorised terrible deeds in his name. But the God of the Christians was more terrible and, as would be proved, would apparently preside over worse human acts—over slaughters, tortures, and human fires innumerable.

It is curiously naïve that the Spanish missionaries to Mexico constantly averred—"Your religion is not unlike ours; only the names of the gods are different."

## V. THE PYRAMID OF CHOLULA

Since the discovery of the tomb of King Tutankhamen there has been in Mexico an amusing feeling of jealousy of Egypt. The era of the mythical Atlantis has been pitted against the era of the Biblical Pharaohs. Archaeologists in Yucatan are reputed to be digging feverishly for some remains of the Maya civilisation which will divert the interest of the world from Luxor.

I have, however, stood in the King's Chamber in the centre of Cheops's Pyramid, and now I have also stood on the apex of the great

pyramid of Cholula, and though the remains of Mexico's great past are impressive, Egypt is by far the more haunting to a European mind. The thought, however, strikes one—what if in that era of the past, when these pyramids were built, the people of these lands so far apart knew one another? Is it possible that the repute of the pyramids of Egypt raised the pyramids of Mexico?

At the time when Cortes came the Aztecs were building pyramids as fast as we build churches; but there were several pyramids in the land which had been there before the Aztecs came to the country, ascribed to Toltecs and Chichimecs and other imperial races which had had their day. The Aztecs hewed massive altars of stone and raised them to the heights of the old pyramids, and they made human sacrifice on them and lit votive flames, which glared red in the night as the army of Cortes marched inland from the sea.

Cholula was the holy city of Anahuac, possessing many temples. It was a centre of pagan piety, conservative, uncompromising. Cortes did not believe its people could possibly be his friends, and so, with the psychology of a tragedy villain, he suddenly in the midst of friendly seeming accused them of treachery and put them to the sword. The populace took refuge on the hundred and twenty steps of the great pyramid, which had then superstructures of wood, but the Spaniards fired it and all who stood on the pyramid perished, even the priest who came out on the apex invoking

Quetzalcoatl the God of the Air. The priest in a shroud of flame burned to death in the sight of all who were below. The remaining Cholultecs fled to the hills. Cortes put up a cross on the apex of the pyramid and then rode away.

The massacre of Cholula was one of the chief crimes charged against Cortes by his enemies in Spain. That it was a dark and impolitic act was not denied, and had the Emperor Montezuma been a warlike monarch he would have met the Spaniards straightway in arms and have certainly destroyed them. He had hundreds of thousands at his command, but the army of Cortes was only a little over four hundred men. But Montezuma, abounding in manners and piety, was notably deficient in brains and pluck. Cortes built a causeway from Cholula to the saddle of the ridge which separates Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, the great volcanoes, and from the height he and his followers looked down on the rich valley of the capital and upon the scene of a decade of loot and centuries of struggle. When they reached the city the Emperor came out with friendly guise to meet them, and Montezuma bade Cortes sit upon his right hand as an equal.

So the destruction of Cholula was proved no error. The Spaniards won their way. They obtained vast quantities of gold, later to be lost; they sacked the pagan temples and destroyed not only the false gods but all the records of the people. They put up Christian churches. They carved out the vice-royalty of New Spain. As they had no women of their own they took Indian wives.

Every Spaniard in those days was a Solomon. And they bred the Mexican who now appears.

My wife and I stood on the top of that pyramid of Cholula. We climbed by an old stoneway, not seldom stepping over stones graved with hieroglyphics of a lost religion. Beside an old cross and in the shadow of a Catholic church we looked on what was Cholula; a squat city with a petrol street-car running through it, a dozen old rusty-coloured churches built of the stones of shattered Aztec temples, a vast ill-kept city square where a large army could be assembled, but now tenanted by fifty Indian women selling wares which were spread on the dirt,—herbs, fruits, cottons, imitation jewellery,—a fountain with stone angels but no water inscribed to Philip III., King of Spain and the Indies, poor people, beshawled women, bare-footed men with ancient, grimy, high-crowned hats of straw.

Change has followed change. By the last revolution in Mexico the Indian has attained equality with the Spaniard, he has in many parts seized the lands of the Spanish; the great haciendas are no more. As working-man the Indian terrorises capital. And as for the Catholic Church into which his forefathers were forcibly baptized, he comes daily to spurn it more. In no other Catholic country in the world is Catholicism more openly humiliated than in Mexico. Is not the popular craze of the time a climbing of the façades of the cathedrals by acrobats and small boys, a kicking off of the noses of the saints in order to advertise beer! Whilst the Papal Nuncio is told



sharply to pack up and quit the country with less notice than would be given a general servant, the petty indignities are manifold and great.

As I go from Cholula in the night, and look behind me, I see a light burning above the apex of the pyramid—no, not the fires of Quetzalcoatl broken out again, only an electric lamp hung above the cross of the church that you may know that it is there.

## VI. TENOCHTITLAN

Puebla, the third largest city in modern Mexico, has grown up near Cholula—one of the few cities that has no Indian history behind it. Puebla was built by the Spaniards and exclusively populated by Spaniards. There at least the Indian woman was not a bride. Something purely Spanish was bred there—as a racial bulwark against possible foes. It remains to-day the most Spanish of all the cities of Mexico, and therefore the most conservative and the most unalterably Catholic.

Puebla is a beautiful and quiet city, largely adorned by the brightly coloured tiles which are a feature of its architecture. Façades of terracotta and gold, purple and yellow tiled domes, are common features of the churches. Around the great cathedral are pillars supporting a hundred angels, and each angel holds an electric light which is generally burning all day as well as all night. Mimosa and palm trees grow over the cool green lawns of the Plaza and lilies bloom beside many fountains. There is some military

parade, as at Tlaxcala, and upon occasion "reactionary" demonstrations. The industrial life is greatly hit by revolutionary economics, and it seems impossible for the city to get back to the prosperity which it used to enjoy.

Like Jalapa, Puebla is an important strategic point. It has been the scene of many battles, and a short walk outside the gates of the city brings you to the old trenches of Frenchmen and Spaniards. In the American War of 1846-48 the plaza of the town was occupied by a little army and many wounded and sick, and the Americans defended it against all comers—talking and bluffing as well as firing and barricading—for a whole month, when they received reinforcements and were able to withdraw.

This can be said for Puebla and its more purely Spanish population—it is more honest, more dignified, less drunken than Mexico City or Vera Cruz or any of the cities where the Indians are in strength.

The way to Mexico City from Puebla tells something of the debauch of the people. It is over a hundred miles, and the country is rich either for pasture or for the cultivation of grain. Rainfall is abundant. Heat and cold are seldom in extremes. But you see no herds grazing there, and few, very few, cornfields. Instead, there are interminable vistas of cultivated cactus, the maguey, raised merely for *pulque*, for the drink that stupefies the nation that takes to it. The freight-cars marked "pulque only" block the lines. At the railway stations women in scores

come to the trains with pulque bottles. The only rich are the owners of the pulque farms, and you see them on silver-mounted saddles, pricking their fine horses with silver spurs. They are on the one hand, and a vast, ragged, sodden population on the other.

Thus to San Juan and the Pyramids of the Sun and the salt lakes and the canals and the floating gardens, to Texcoco and Chalco and Xochimilco, to Iztapalapa and the metal-shod causeway by which Cortes marched to the city. Iztapalapa is a sad place now, like a sort of Arab village except for the visiting tram-car which comes out from the great metropolis, loops a loop at the Plaza, and returns through the dust and dirt to the *Zocalo*, the square of the great pyramid in Mexico City.

Near where Montezuma and Cortes met now stand ugly but powerful and suggestive national monuments—of Indian warrior and squaw, designed for the Zocalo but felt by the Mexicans to be too indelicate for a prominent public place. The Mexicans of to-day are proud of their Indian blood, but do not care to be reminded too realistically of what the Indians were. The squat, broad-nosed, large-mouthed, pendulous-cheeked faces, the short legs, the barrel-shaped bodies, the feather ornaments, the war-clubs and darts, do not appeal to the mind of the modern Mexican, who would rather think of his ancestors as debonnair, Frenchified, with faces and bodies like those of Greek or Roman heroes.

Montezuma regaled the Spaniards very well,

not only feeding them and gilding them with presents, but bestowing upon each soldier a bevy of wives. There was not one who had less than ten wives. Cortes could not find his men, they were lost among the young squaws. He was obliged to limit the numbers of female servants—but Montezuma hearing of the trouble arranged special quarters for the harems of the soldiers. Cortes himself was much embarrassed by the number of princesses he was called upon to marry. He had his troubles with the women—did he not push his first wife down a well?—and according to the historians made great scruple against taking on new ties. However, he took to himself the peerless Marina, who helped him greatly in his conquest of her brother Indians.

The Aztecs, it appears, had no code of morals kin to those current in the Old World. Sensual lust was not a violent passion amongst them. They bought and sold their women, lived polygamously, but women were not centres of voluptuousness. This, it seems, has remained. The Mexican is not hot-blooded over women. He is comparatively cold, and the women are demure and chaste. The contrast, for instance, between Cuban and Mexican is considerable; the mixed blood of Spanish and Negroes is very lustful, the mixed blood of Spaniard and Indian is cold and self-sufficient in the matter of sex.

One reads of the bestowal of beautiful girls upon the Spaniards, but the beauty was doubtless exaggerated. It is difficult to find much feminine beauty among the Aztecs now. There is

a moment of unearthly beauty, just a moment, early in the teens, and then the Aztec girl goes heavy and repulsive-looking; her coal-black hair becomes coarse as a horse's mane, her bosom spreads, dirt gets the better of her body. The Mexicans of all classes are remarkably indelicate and dirty. As for their children, a foreigner might be tempted to caress them or play with them, but a glance at the faces causes him to draw away his hands from unwashed skins and sores.

There is no doubt that the Spaniards in allying themselves to the Aztecs joined themselves to a race which was lower than themselves. In the romantic attitude to the Aztecs it is often forgotten that they were cannibals and ate their prisoners of war. A race whose instincts permitted it to do that was obviously in a degraded state. It may safely be said that the Aztecs had no great future, even if Cortes had not come; they were brutal, mentally deficient and depraved, possessed of rites and customs repellent to all who possess a living God.

## VII. IN THE MARQUISATE OF OAXACA

Cortes was recognised and rewarded, and he made a happy end of life. He overcame all the intrigues. His success, like a rising sun, triumphed over all mists and clouds and at its zenith shone over half the world. His Emperor honoured him and granted to him and his heirs in perpetuity the lands of the Valley of Oaxaca, with all the

wealth therein contained, both potential and actual. On the strength of it the Cortes of to-day ought to be Morgans or Rothschilds. Oaxaca is one of the most golden valleys of Mexico, a marvellous place, *el dorado* itself in the eyes of the first pioneers, who grabbed what they could carry and lost what they could not defend.

Hernando Cortes became the "Marquis of the Valley," and known commonly in Spanish annals as "the great Marquis," a title which in British history is however associated with a nobler man, the Marquis of Montrose.

Oaxaca, pronounced Wahahca, is some three hundred miles south-west of the capital, reached by rocky, narrow, and often precipitous trails once the secret knowledge of Indians, but now followed by a railroad considered a marvel of scientific engineering. No motor road goes through—and it is adventurous going for either horseman or pedestrian. It is one of the ways to the Pacific shore, and once the capital of the Marquisate is reached it is not a difficult journey on horseback to Tehuantepec or Salina Cruz, down on the quiet beaches of the Southern Sea.

It should be said that Oaxaca is now a State, and that the heirs of Cortes have long since dissipated their fortunes. English and Americans now own the most valuable properties of the valley, which is recognised still as one of the richest mining districts of Mexico. Oaxaca has enriched thousands of individuals. Mexicans without doing work pathetically hope to stumble suddenly on large fortunes. The legends they

preserve of hidden gold are many. The Indians especially are supposed to hold secrets, which they hand down from generation to generation, of the shrines and treasures of their lost gods. As cupidity is not a vice of the pure-blood Indian, this seems always conceivable. You can find out nothing by asking Indians questions. Their innocent mirthfulness under cross-examination has always been one of the most baffling matters to the Spaniard. The days of burning them alive to find their secrets have of course long passed, but the Indians told little under stress of pain. Over the slow fire their innocent mirth changed to a suffering taciturnity and that unearthly fixed gaze which showed a race that had conquered pain.

Out in this valley most of the people now are pure-blood Indians, either Zapotecs or Mixtecs, unambitious, easy-going, fruitful, and true to the soil on which they have always lived. They were never an imperial race like the Aztecs, nor revengeful like the Totonacs. They have no inheritance of ill-will, and all seem as happy as kings. Oaxaca to-day, despite the turmoil of the revolution, presents a picture of what Mexico as a whole might be if her peoples possessed the right temperament. For my part, I count the three weeks I spent in the Marquisate as the happiest in Mexico. One could easily become content to live a long while there. The people retain their national customs, and they are marvelously good-humoured; crime is rare, pistols infrequent; the cost of living is less than half that

of the capital—you can live very well on two dollars a day; and the winter climate is perfect. The happiness of the little city is greatly enhanced by a large city square where a fine brass band plays every evening amid palms and electric lights and lilies and hanging rosy pomegranates.

The cathedral faces the Palacio, and coloured-stone porticos of shops face porticos of other shops. The broad efflorescent square or *plaza* is between. The cathedral, alas! looks like a ruin, and has been taken and retaken by soldiers in many fights. The Church is too poor to repair it. I saw the "Hombre Mosca," the "Human Fly," climb its pretty façade one morning, stepping on the carved figures of saints and patting the Infant Christ in St. Christopher's arms on his way up, and the Church was quite impotent to stop the insult, even on a Sunday when Mass was observed within. A curious contrast, surely: a whole congregation on its knees listening to the sermon of an archbishop within, a hilarious crowd outside cheering the Human Fly, and the brass band playing lustily. Something of the destiny of Mexico in that! But in my opinion the human flies hold the future. Sitting on the top of the cross on the turret of the cathedral, an American acrobat, called "Babe White," unfurls a flag on which is printed "Drink Montezuma Beer." Poor old Pope, dead and gone Holy Inquisition, what think you of that?

The Palacio, where I saw the Governor, Garcia Vigil, just before he left for Mexico City, where he was badly shot by a hired assassin, is



a fine building rendered more impressive by its Indian sentries, some of whom are extremely handsome and fine-looking soldiers. The legislative business of the State is transacted in this Palacio, and it occupies the whole of one side of the square. Here one may commonly see in the evenings and on Saturday morning long lines of Indians waiting for wages. On Saturday mornings the band enters the interior square of the Palacio and plays while waiting for its pay.

The shops which flank the other two sides exhibit various *novedades* in dress, and many marvellous hats ranging in price from ten to a hundred dollars. As Mexicans are more proud of their head-wear than of any other part of their attire, they are ready to pay fantastic prices for hats. These sombreros, which are usually of felt or velour, are sometimes two feet high and three feet across from rim to rim. When a little dark man puts on one of these he changes in aspect and looks like some sort of fantastic magician.

In front of the shops and yet under the covered way of the porticos are many tables and booths, and at the tables men wearing these sombreros and long black moustachios play dominoes and drink beer. At the booths quiet-eyed women sell cigarettes and sweets, and all along the curb outside the coloured arches of the porticos sit Indian women with hair hanging to the pavement, breasts exposed and piccaninnies sucking there.

The scene in the plaza at nightfall, when the whole population comes out in parade, is in its

way a ballet, unrehearsed and yet faultless. The life of the whole seems to be the band up in the fine stand in the central circle of the square. There stands the perfect little Zapotec conductor facing another Indian, who, with gourds in his hands, waves his rattle with long arms; and on each side of them and around them is resounding brass. A fine discipline has been achieved and a military precision in play. German and Spanish compositions alternate. Marches and Spanish dances seem to have a preference, and with joyous clamour and seductive melodies take possession of every man, woman, and child in the plaza. Most remarkable are the tatterdemalion crowds of Indians, who, in cotton slops and bits of old blankets tied together, tramp into town and creep out of the dirt and the dust to the inner court of the bandstand. There they crouch and stare, though they get the music in ear-breaking blasts, being far too close. But they love to hear in the midst of it the rattle of the gourd-players, the rattle of the raindrops as in their own half-forgotten rituals. Huddled together they stare at the brass, at the gourds, at the Zapotec bandmaster in his perfectly ironed regimentals.

From the inner court of the bandstand go six shady tracks, under palms, and scarlet-flowering trees, and orange fruits dripping from boughs, and pomegranate trees; and these tracks reach the broad outer court, round which like mystic shapes the great crowd comes and goes.

Here run the newsboys crying, "Patria, Patria," and boys with dozens of bottles on their

little heads shouting, "Frescos, frescos," and scores of bootblacks with little wooden stools calling to all and sundry, "Grasar, grasar." Here walk stately ice-cream merchants with coloured barrels balanced on their heads, and swarthy sun-burned men with sheaves of blankets for sale. Every Indian wears a blanket either slit at the middle for his head to go through or swathed about his body from head to foot as the Arab wears his burnous. Scarlet and orange are the commonest colours of these blankets. They wear their sombreros, the poor ones of straw, the rich ones of felt, Popocatepetls of felt, high-domed, vastly brimmed, embroidered. Here are grey hats all decorated with sailing ships and anchors worked in brown silk. Here are white hats bedizened with silver tinsel sewn on as the Indian women sew beetle-backs and butterfly-wings into their embroideries in India. The great hats flock, they shadow the pavement. And all the while *tran-tan-tan* above it dominates the band.

Little boys carrying sugar-canes eight feet long all hung with tiny flags add great colour to the scene. The canes are perforated with tiny holes, and in each hole is a sugar-plum mounted on a long match or wire, and each sugar-plum has a tiny flag hanging from it. A dozen boys are carrying these resplendent poles; several others are carrying gourds perforated and adorned in the same way.

There are park seats all the way round, and there sit the more leisurely of the listeners, and the tired, and watch the world go by. Old

dames with trays of pineapple, and girls with baskets of pine kernels, go from seat to seat selling their wares.

The Zapotec women are straight as pine trees. They wear voluminous cotton skirts, but their feet are bare. Above the waist they do not mind how much of their bodies they expose; they wear commonly a slightly embroidered cotton vest cut as low as the rise of their bosoms and leaving their arms bare from just below the shoulders. They have broad open faces, carved mouths, lined brows, and an enormous flow of raven hair, which they allow to hang almost to their knees. They wear earrings of filigree gold, and beautiful gold chains round their bare necks. They may be on the point of beggary and yet wear these. The young ones are very beautiful, but quiet-eyed and never lascivious. They hold their heads so far back that if they wore hairpins and dropped one it would always fall clear of their bodies.

Outside the Palacio the sentries march to and fro with bayonets fixed and loaded rifles. The sergeant of the guard has golden bobbinettes hanging from six golden chevrons. At the changing of the guard bugles sound within the palace yard in a sort of counterblast to the triumphant choruses of brass coming from the branches of the palm trees and the electric lights of the bandstand. Oaxaca, birthplace of Diaz, birthplace of Juarez, is proud of itself and makes some show under the Mexican sky.

Round and round walks the crowd, and there mingle with the Indians American men and

women, jaunty men dressed anyhow and women in low-cut evening gowns, simpering to one another and to their male companions. Mexican belles also come out, with highly painted faces and dainty manicured hands. Girls in their teens join one another, and all holding arms walk in strings of sevens and eights. Youths of similar age walk in similar strings. Horsemen with tight trousers and silver spurs dismount and tie up their steeds and join the throng. The Governor himself, the legislature of the State, joins the parade. There is the highest and also the lowest. Bow, bow, bow, come the beggars. You give them centavos or you give them cakes. They wear old dusty sombreros of straw, and you put the cakes in the brim. You see beggars with dozens of cakes and *tortillas* and rolls in the brims of their straw sombreros. The blind beggars walk in tandems: blind mother led by seeing child, sister by sister, grandfather by grandson. There are two pseudo-beggars, too proud actually to beg, and they get more alms than all the rest. One is a magnificent fellow with a gigantic straw sombrero. He has lost both legs at the knee, but he must have been very handsome. He has large pads now like the wooden boots put on horses drawing the heavy roller over a lawn, and on these pads he walks like any other man, using hip muscles where we use the muscles of the knee. His yellow hat points backward from his head; he carries a boot-black's stool, and wherever he goes the crowd makes way for him—a king of the pavement and of all beggars and bootblacks. The other

pseudo-beggar is a boy with curved spine and twisted body. He walks on all-fours and has a basket of matches or sweets hung from his neck. All among the people he jumps like a frog—and whose heart can be so hard as to refuse him when he looks up with angel smile, so sweetly, so appealingly? You pretend to buy, he looks at what you give him, meditatively. He looks up at you, smiling, but perhaps a little troubled in expression.

“*Adios?*” he asks, as if it were a question.

“*Adios,*” you reply.

The trouble clears from his face; he is perfectly happy.

“*Adios, adios,*” he exclaims, and hops on like a frog amid the bare brown feet of the Indians and the polished boots of Mexicans and Americans.

*Tran-tan-tan* goes the band all the while, and the Zapotec bandmaster with narrowed waist and rigid little head and shoulders looks like Juarez himself. And the rattle of the gourds is like tambourines struck on the knees of dancing girls.

#### VIII. UNDER THE GREAT TREE OF TULE

The greatest tree in the Americas, though not the highest, is in the far south of Mexico at Tule, some ten miles from Oaxaca; the highest and perhaps the oldest is to be found among the Californian sequoias. But in girth and grandeur the cypress of our Lady of Tule has no rival.

The Aztecs called it the Ahuehuetl, but it was a fine old tree at the dawn of their history. It must have been a great tree in the time of the Toltecs, and was before them too. Perhaps some emperor planted it two thousand years ago. Who can say?

Cortes and his horsemen, on their way to Honduras, stood under it four centuries ago, and their followers built a chapel there beside it, that men might fitly turn from a marvellous creation to a marvellous Creator.

It is a pleasant ride from the city in the early hours of the morning. The Zapotecs found us horses (with hooded stirrups and corded bridles), and my wife and I rode out to Tule. It was market-day in the city, and we threaded our way through innumerable Indians and droves of asses laden with panniers.

The astonishment of the Indian women at seeing a lady in riding attire was very amusing. They for their part pick up their long flounced cotton skirts and sit with their bare feet balanced on the asses' shoulders. Flanked by baskets and sitting on heaps of merchandise on the ass's back, so they ride to market, often suckling a baby the while. But one of their sex astride! "Good Saint Anne!" "Jesu Maria!"—"Look, sister!"—"Adios!" Their conventions were not our conventions. They carried pigs strung by the legs to the asses' sides, and dangling turkeys and fowls. They brought pots innumerable and baskets of eggs and tomatoes and alligator pears. Some Indians on foot plunged through the dust, and

waddling all across the broad highway the asses came on in droves.

When we had ridden out of this turmoil into the fresher air we were in a land of wild mimosa and that "smell of the wattle" of which Kipling has written memorable words:

The smell of the wattle by Lichtenberg,  
Riding in, in the rain.

But there is no rain in Mexico all the winter long, and all odours that come on the air are warm. Trees with scarlet flowers bend over us. The pomegranate hangs its rosy fruit, the coffee berries ripen on the shrubs, and trees that know no fall, no nakedness of limb, hang everlasting canopies of green. We ride gaily over ploughed cornfields and along the borders of plantations where sugar-canes chatter with the wind.

Then anon towards noon we descry a settlement veiled in verdure, and like a green knoll rising above it the vast upper story of a mighty tree. There is no need to ask. It must be Tule and its tree. And we rode by narrow shady lanes between banana palms, date palms, and flowering shrubs, criss-cross from the highway to the tree.

Behold a great cliff of wood, grey like a willow or an ash, with an under-bark of nut-fibre colour, going upward in a grand sweep to the branches. At the five bays of the tree one might build five fair-sized houses.

All is silent, all is beautiful round about it. A beggar only is sitting under the tree. The large white church behind it reflects a blaze of



sunshine. A bougainvillaea, twenty feet high, is one mass of crimson bloom all attended by bees and wasps. The solid white wall which runs round with block-house at one corner is unimpaired. On the white façade of the high, broad church are painted tall Moorish decorations in an intense royal blue, tall slender mosques of gleaming blue, and big red empty niches for saints beside them.

The tree lifts its voluminous green bulk higher than the church, but all ~~its~~ branches, all its stems and leaves, hang as it were in reverence to the high-placed figure of the Virgin. It is plume-leaved, and the tree is held sacred by many tribes as the tree of mourning. It has the grand dignity of sorrow for the dead.

What a tree! A hundred horses could stand under it. Half-way up, in the midst of the giant growth, starts straight and bolt upright a new tree, larger itself than any King Charles's Oak, larger even than that tree in Palestine under which the Greek monks tell you Abraham and Sarah entertained their Lord. The German Baron Humboldt, famous traveller in his day, scratched his name on it in the year 1802, the only name, the only vandalism, which has been permitted. It is a perfect tree in full maturity, the same species of cypress as the Tree of the Dreadful Night at Mexico City, but in incomparably better condition and much larger and older. If it could tell its story, the lingering of Cortes and his men in its shade would be but a page. For it must ever have attracted the attention of whoever passed

that way. The old cities like Mitla, twenty miles away, are choked in dust. But with the freshness of spring the tree lives on.

Outside the walled churchyard which holds the tree is the town plaza, swarming with wasps, but without gardens or bandstands or any of the common adornments of such places, not even a statue of Juarez. But there is an old *portal* and one shut shop bearing the curious name of *La Vuelta al Mundo*, The Return to the World. But they have all gone their way, those who sat under the tree in ages past, and none return to tell us how it was in their day.

So—we to our horses once more, leaving, like the others, the tree behind, like old Time itself.

#### IX. FROM THE RUINS OF MITLA

Mitla is the American Luxor, and in the quieter days of Diaz' rule in Mexico many were the travellers who went there, to gaze and wonder. The ruins are those of some great city of a bygone civilisation, but what civilisation, whose civilisation, none can tell. History does not work for them as for the ruins of ancient Athens or Thebes—for they are entirely without record, and their story, whatever it may be, interweaves in no way with the story of mankind as we know it. How rash the "Outline of History" seems when we look at the broken outlines of what is called Mitla! And the Biblical traditions can hardly be felt to have any reference to Mitla either,

unless, as some archaeologists have believed, the country was originally settled by one of the lost tribes of Israel.

The greater part of the North American continent is without ruins, unless one thinks of the evidences of primitive man living there for ages. The mounds on the high banks of the Mississippi and the cliff dwellings of New Mexico tell not of a romantic past but of the uncouth savagery of the Stone Age. But away south, in the latitude of what is now British Honduras, are evidences of a way of living not unlike that of Greeks and Romans, or of Egyptians. In fact, the dumbfounding truth is that the ruins are of a convincing resemblance to the ruins of the East. Whoever lived there prized gold and gems as did humanity in the Old World, and there is evidence enough that they lived for empire as did Persians and Babylonians. But they also built as humanity built in ages past in Egypt, in the East. The ruins of Mitla would not be supremely remarkable in the vicinity of Athens or Tyre or on the Nile. They would be almost in place. It is not merely because of the pyramids. The principal site of pyramids in Mexico is two hundred and more miles to the north, and though, of course, one is tempted to link the Mexican pyramids with those of Egypt, the likeness is less startling than at first appears.

It is common in peoples to imitate in their architecture the natural contours of their surroundings, and I think the Mexican pyramids with their truncated tops are imitations in stone

of the altar-like, pyramidal mountains, the little *mesas*, so characteristic of the Anahuac plateau. First, victims were offered for sacrifice on sacred mountains, and then, as a stage of progress, on stone piles shaped like mountains.

But Mitla, and again Palenque, in a similar latitude two hundred and fifty miles east, are not imitations of anything in nature, but rather triumphs over ordinary life in vast untamed wildernesses. Their buildings have tradition and style. Whoever lived at Mitla lived sumptuously there.

I travelled to the little mining town of Tlacolula, where the high road hastens downward to Tehuantepec and the Pacific, and then took horses from the Zapotecs. Here all the inhabitants are either Zapotec or Mixtec Indians. And I spent a dusty day at Mitla. Riding up a strange valley betwixt cavernous rock walls marked by splurges of ancient colour, I thought of an immemorial road and slaves with pots on their heads and princes in chariots drawn by men. I thought of wars, invasions, and the massacre and destruction in what must have been the last days of that Mitla Empire when some barbarous race which cared not for Art swept in upon the people and destroyed them.

There is a Zapotec village now. There were Kings of Zapotec when Cortes came, and he made nothing of their kingship, though the greatest ruler that the Mexican people now acknowledge was a Zapotec, the famous and beloved President, Benito Juarez.

Behind the village, scorched and sun-bleached, lie the heaps of what was empire, of what was ancient wreckage in the days when the Spaniards came. Some of it lies in shapeless ruin—perhaps the homes of the poor. Zapotec houses of adobe have added to the heaps. There were Zapotec buildings which the Spaniards sacked; there were tombs of Zapotec kings or the mummies of kings, stored with gold and gems in the ancient vaults of stone. Mitla figured for long in the quest for El Dorado. And still to-day it is believed by the Indians that vast sacred treasures are here stored away. They guard the place with superstitious horror still, and a grand work of excavation leading to the discovery of subterranean temples and mausoleums might credibly lead to an uprising.

But I stood there undisturbed and looked at the great monoliths and halls, the stumps of classic pillars, the great walls with their conventional carvings and crosses. I went underground into an atmosphere hot and close as the interior of a pyramid—into mysterious chambers. I crept, candle in hand, into an abyss of darkness, as it were into the hidden past of the dead. And with relief I returned to the tropic blaze of light outside.

There stand long, low white walls with fretted battlements, and there are hieroglyphics which tell no story, and there in the dust lie the footmarks of bare-footed Indians. What does it all mean? Who has the book of the words? There is no answer. I write my name in a register

which an Indian workman keeps—"Year 1923, Nationality British." I came and I passed. I have a signature, but Mitla has none. That is not even its name. But fitly might one read—

My name is Ozymandias, king of kings ;  
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair.

## V. AD ASTRA

THE story of gold commences in Genesis when of a certain country we are told, "The gold of that land is good." It does not say for what or for whom it was good. It was just good. Gold is good: that was in the beginning.

Primitive man held gold in his hand as children do bright pebbles, and he was pleased with it, as God the Creator Himself was reputed to be pleased with the world when He had made it. Man in the earliest days kept the gold which he picked up, made a possession of it, fought to keep it, fought also to get other men's gold. Or he stole it and he was sued at law for its return.

He burnished his gold, he cut it, he melted it, he cast it as personal adornment, he re-cast it as idols, he saw that fire had no power to destroy it, he put its power above the power of the sun, he worshipped it.

No animal prizes gold, not even the ape. Desire for it is a human passion.

After gold the greatest possession was in brides, who were bought and sold for a weight of gold somewhat less than their own weight of flesh. And after men's wives their cattle were most precious and sold also for gold. Primitive man

worshipped the idea of the perfect bride in a goddess of gold, and he worshipped his herds in the golden calf and golden bulls.

Judah's gods were largely gold and sex. Moses gave, however, their vital revelation. His creative spirit distilled the idea of Jehovah, invisible law-giver and controller set above all visible creation. Still the weakness of the Israelites has remained until this day—a passion for sex and gold.

Gold in itself has nothing of evil in it. It is as innocent as iron or tin. If we call gold fine and lead base, it is because we ascribe to them our human ideas about them. Gold at best was prized for its beauty and its scarcity. It could fittingly adorn a bride, it could fittingly be devoted to Jehovah as in the building of the Temple, but once it had been used to make a golden calf it had been befouled and could not be worn again or devoted to the True God. Moses made the children of Israel *eat* that disgraced gold—after the calf which they made of their Egyptian spoils had been consumed by fire.

It is, however, possible that much of the gold of the Egyptians is worn and used by men and women to-day. Gold does not easily perish, and yet is not easily recognisable. It exists from age to age, cast and re-cast in ever new forms, gilding ever new superstitions, glories, and ambitions. The gold of Darius was the gold of Alexander, and the gold of Alexander was gold in the triumphs of the Romans. In turn it adorned the rude limbs of Huns and Goths and Franks and Saracens. It glittered in the Field of



the Cloth of Gold. It was part of the treasure of the Popes—but why labour the point? Gold has not been allowed to disappear. Tombs are rifled for it. Ocean's bottom is dredged for it. Every man who digs the soil is ready to identify it.

The gold of the New World proved a marvellous accession, and drew men to it more than did the Cross of our religion. The Wise Men fixed their eyes on the East, seeking to lay aside their pride and bow to the spiritual new birth. But the young men of our era set their eyes upon the West, saying, "Gold—we will go there for gold." And the older men looked there also, asking for power, of which gold is the index.

Ah! it has been and is the great desideratum: gold, pockets full, coffers full, bank full, heart full—to be finished with the practical problem of life and to have at our disposal all that gold can command.

With their gold the rich gild temples as of old, forgetting the lesson that our God "preferreth above all temples the upright heart and pure." The cynics and the buffoons and the rabble make also their golden calves, which in turn some spiritual Moses will cast down.

But where is the poetry of the quest of *el dorado*? Surely always in the quest and never in the attainment. If ever in life you find what you are seeking, you have gone wrong. Finding, you lose. The whole of life is balanced betwixt the aching heart and the golden dream.

When the quest is transmuted to music, which at its highest strives to express the inexpressible,

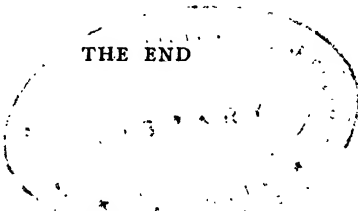
the ineffable, the unqualified  $\alpha$  of life, gold is represented in deep notes and remote superterrestrial harmonies suggesting a golden age, a golden dream, all that we have missed, the pathos of mortality, the forever lost, the infinitely precious past. There were beautiful women, myriads of them, each distinct and lovely, in far-off other times, centuries, ages ago—Queens of Sheba, Helens. They sleep like the daughter of Pharaoh beside a lotus flower, gone to dust, going to dust, to infinite fineness. Your eyes never saw them; they lifted their faces in the morning, at sunrise in the valleys, or on the mountains, far away, in other times. We look back to them from the afternoon, from the evening, from a later time; we cannot see them. They are hidden for ever, like the heart of the world.

“Seek, and ye shall find” means “Seek for ever, and ye shall find.” “Knock, and it shall be opened” means “Knock for ever, and it shall be opened.” How can we in our mortality find the gold? We cannot. The true eldoradoist, hammer in hand, is knocking and tapping for ever, seeking veins of gold, seeking hollow chambers, seeking and opening tombs, climbing Westward after a vision which forsakes him every day of his life.

But whither have we led our thoughts, into what star-lit unreality? This volume, the like of which was no doubt burned at Alexandria thousands of years ago, is a study of reality, is it not?—the study of the quest of an everlasting substance by those who cannot last? It concerns

largely the five last centuries of the second millennium after Christ, and certain peoples called Spanish, Indian, Anglo-Saxon. The Spanish people obtained a great hold on the gold, but it has fallen from their grasp. Americans now are foremost on the track of El Dorado, a super-race who seek gold, it is true, but seek more the power of which gold is the index. They will take gold by machinery; power giving gold and gold giving power. They have seen in the mirage a golden dream and called it Pan-America.

There, most fittingly, closes this volume of the study of the Quest of El Dorado. A thought, however, comes to me while looking at the Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan—"When America has consolidated Pan-America from Alaska to Panama she may build a great imperial memorial, a pyramid greater than all other pyramids, a massive work of stone on which Time can play but little havoc. And ultimately that pyramid alone will survive her. In the long night of history it will stand, in the starlit unreality of forgotten Time. Others, somewhere afar, will be seeking still."



THE END

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